

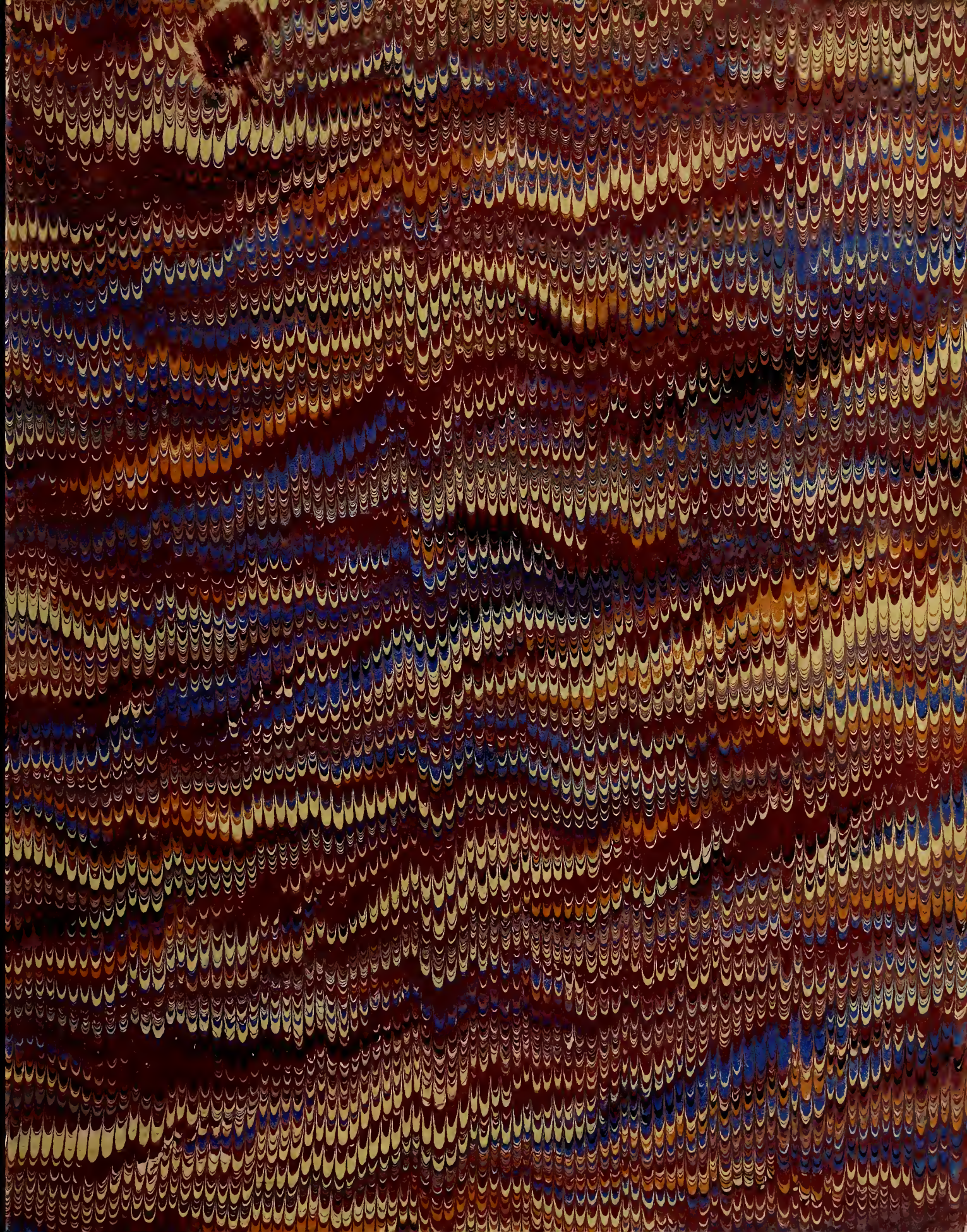
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REV.<sup>d</sup>

James Bentley Gordon?



AN  
HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL  
**MEMOIR**  
OF THE  
**NORTH-AMERICAN**  
*CONTINENT;*  
ITS  
NATIONS AND TRIBES:  

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BY THE REV. JAMES BENTLEY GORDON.  

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WITH A  
**Summary Account**  
OF  
**HIS LIFE,**  
*WRITINGS, AND OPINIONS.*

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Dublin :

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## TO THE KING.

SIR,

*It is surely an auspicious circumstance, not only for the orphan daughters of the Author, for whose benefit this Publication is; but for mankind, that the greatest Sovereign of the world, is the most sensible to a call of humanity and letters. It would ill become me to presume further, than to subscribe myself, with the deepest gratitude, your Majesty's most faithful, most obedient, and most humble subject and servant,*

**THOMAS JONES,**

*Representative of the late JAMES BENTLEY GORDON.*

*Nutgrove School, Rathfarnham,  
20th May, 1820.*





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**A SUMMARY ACCOUNT**  
**OF THE**  
***LIFE, WRITINGS, AND OPINIONS,***  
**OF THE LATE**  
**REV. JAMES BENTLEY GORDON,**  
*Rector of Killegny, in the Diocese of Ferns ; and of Canaway, in that of Cork ;*  
Author of “*Terraquea ; or, Memoirs Geographical and Historical ;*”—  
of the “*History of the Rebellion of 1798 ;*”—“*of Ireland*”—  
and “*of the British Islands.*”

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✍ The Reader will please to correct with his pen the following

### ERRATA :

PAGE 32, line 9, (of Note) for “Γυγιππον”	read Γυλιππον.
..... — — 11, (of Do.) — “συσιν”	— δυνιν.
..... 44, — 2,	— “natural” — national.
..... 75, — 3,	— “intellectual” — unintellectual.
..... — — —	— “concilii” — consilii.





## A SUMMARY ACCOUNT, &c.

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“ WE have but collected this Volume, and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphans, guardians, without ambition, either of self-profit, or fame, only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow, alive.

“ HEMINGE AND CONDELL.”

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DOCTOR JOHNSON complains, that even Goldsmith's life of Parnel, is dull and unentertaining, as the writer had no proper knowledge (“ had not eaten and drunk with him”) of his subject. He knew the man, whose character he described, by report only. He was not acquainted with the exact features of his mind, the peculiarities of his manners, their shape and colour. The remark is acute and just: but not sufficiently extended—no variety of incident, no dramatic cast of character can be thrown into the biography of a secluded and sedentary scholar, which may render the narrative lively and entertaining.



The truth and reality of the likeness should be preserved, and they admit not of such extraneous ornaments. Happy it is for the narrator, that he can thus throw a veil over his own deficiencies, by imputing them to the deficiency of the subject—that he can conceal his dulness by attributing it to the sameness which necessarily attaches to the quiet, unvaried life of a secluded scholar, who never mingled with the great and learned, except in scenes of rural tranquillity—who led a species of still life, which, howsoever abundant in happiness, affords little matter for narration. Yet, although this narrative is dull, it is consolatory to the writer. It is a medicine to his sorrow, and a gratification to his pride; for a man may be proud to have enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Gordon, from boyhood upwards, for thirty-four years, without the interruption of an hour. Medicinal for the mind, while thus employed, seems, to hold converse with,

“ The guide, philosopher and friend,”

who gilded all the joys of past life, and softened all its sorrows.

JAMES BENTLEY GORDON was the son of the Rev. James Gordon, of Neeve-hall, county Londonderry, in the north of Ireland, a younger branch of the Ducal family of Gordon, by the then Earls of Hunt-

ley, who having adhered to the race of the Stuarts, shared in their misfortunes; and the residue are now mostly scattered through Scotland and Jamaica.

His mother was daughter of Thomas Neeve, celebrated in British biography, as a man of eminent science and literature; and was nephew to the great Bentley, whose fame so many of his descendents participate in, and are honoured by. This gentleman having been connected by marriage with the MacCartney and Sidney families, illustrious names, left a large personal property to his grand-children. By the mismanagement of the trustee, it became of no value to them. The present Sir Thomas Neeve, of Essex, Baronet, is lineal descendant of the maternal branch of Mr. Gordon's family—as was also the celebrated Richard Cumberland, who till within a few months of his death maintained a correspondence with the subject of this narrative.

Although Mr. Gordon was fully alive to the great value of family-respectability to society at large, and considered it as a great stimulus—an additional incentive to honourable conduct in life, he notwithstanding never boasted of his. "*Quæ non fecimus ipsi, vix ea, nostra voco.*" But indeed no man, who has a claim to a good descent should undervalue it.



It is a badge of distinction, which makes all other honours sit with a better grace. Doubtlessly, as Horace says, and as many of even kings and nobles have said, since Horace's time, true nobility resides in the mind, and is not to be measured by splendid titles and ancestral dignity. It cannot with unerring certainty, be transmitted from father to son. It may however be admitted that hereditary rank and family honours continued from generation to generation, engender, spread and secure a distinctive highmindedness of conduct, which renders the acquisitions of this generation the seeds and plants of the virtues and excellencies of those which are to follow. Men are thus most effectually formed into "what nature and the gods designed them." A stronger stimulus is thus given to man's exertions than by any considerations merely personal and selfish.

Having received the usual school-education, he entered Trinity College, Dublin; and originally purposed to read for a fellowship, but was prevented by a long illness, terminating in a weakness of sight, which for many years, deprived him of all power of reading: and although he subsequently acquired strength enough of vision to be able to read a book placed close to the eye, he never acquired sufficient clearness of sight to enable him to read with ease and fluency. This defect threw an ungraceful, uncommendatory

awkwardness over his whole demeanour. It affected and blunted the whole system of his tastes, by excluding him, before he had sufficiently stored his mind with images, from an expansive or an exact view of nature. He never acquired a perception of the beauties of a landscape, or a flower; and the narrator remembers his being laughed at by a lady, to whom he once presented a flaring, full-blown peony, as "a beautiful rose."

During his continuance in college, he engaged the attachment and lasting friendship of several very respectable men. On leaving it, about the year 1773, he entered into orders. Subsequently, in early life, about 1776, he became acquainted with the late Lord Courtown, (as private tutor to his sons) a man who, endowed with all the refinement and high polish which a court can bestow upon a noble nature, knew how to value, and had an innate regard for simplicity and integrity such as Mr. Gordon's. In fact, his Lordship, who had the best possible opportunities of knowing him intimately and well, as he lived in his family, at Courtown, for some years, always, as is evident by his letters, regarded him not only with esteem, but cordiality.

In or about the year 1779, he married Miss Bookey, daughter of Richard Bookey, Esq.; a family of



high respectability, in the counties of Wicklow and Kildare; a son of which, Thomas Bookey, Esq. (a nephew of Mrs. Gordon) of Mount Garnet, in the county Kilkenny, was lately, June 1819, married to a daughter of the present Lord Bishop of Elphin\*; and Miss Bookey, Mrs. Gordon's niece, heiress of the main branch of her family, is married to James Chritchley, Esq., repeatedly Sheriff of the counties of Wicklow and Kildare; and who, although a man of extensive possessions, is still better known for integrity, liberality, and correctness, in all the walks and commerce of life.

Whatever other advantages Mr. Gordon may have derived from his marriage, it is certain that the first, and best object of life was fully obtained by it. The cheerfulness and kindness of his wife's disposition, her blandness of manners and goodness of heart threw a family-paradise around him. If, fortunately, they had been reared in habits of judicious economy, they would have found their income amply sufficient for all the purposes of a respectable establishment, which indeed (though by incurring debts) they always upheld; but, though neither of them was extravagant, they were improvident, and never sufficiently understood, and attended to the conduct and distribution

\* Since the foregoing was written (in July last) his Lordship has been translated to the Archdiocese of Tuam.

of their fortune. Thus, therefore, with them the brightness of life was too often obscured by pecuniary difficulties and embarrassments. But the sweetness of her temper, and the philosophy of his, soon dissipated those clouds; and they cast only a slight and transient gloom over minds engaged and engrossed by the necessary cares and attention to a numerous and growing offspring.

Shortly after his marriage Mr. Gordon undertook the establishment of a boarding school, at Marlfield, between Gorey and Courtown, in the county Wexford; and for some years, he was entrusted with the education of the sons of several most respectable men. But neither his health, nor his habits corresponded with the severe and unremitting duty of a schoolmaster. If he failed in that occupation, Milton and Johnson did so before him. That he was beloved by most of his pupils; and by some of them in no ordinary degree, the narrator well knows. Among others, the sons of the late Mr. Coleman, of Newtown, near Rathfarnham, with their father, (a gentleman of the greatest worth and intelligence,) were attached to him, with respect and cordiality during their lives. All the survivors of this most amiable family, continue their regards with undiminished sensibility, for his memory, towards the objects most dear to him.



Many a delightful scene of literary conversation, of philosophical instruction, of parental solicitude, of Christian example, witnessed in this family, rushes on the recollection of the narrator and presses for utterance; but he must check himself from the detail. Dull heads, or cold hearts may ridicule the living picture portrayed by Goldsmith, of domestic bliss in the Wakefield family, and turn from it, as an exaggeration of the poet's imagination, or a vulgar scene of low enjoyment; but indeed the poet's pen adds nothing to the reality of Mr. Gordon's family fire-side at Marlfield. He doubtlessly possessed the same unaffected simplicity and integrity of character, which Goldsmith gives his Vicar. He was actuated by the same benevolence of humanity and oblivion for its weakness, and was never touched with hostility except against vice, intolerance, or aggression.

“Φίλος δ' ἔμν ἀνθρωποισι, πάντας γὰρ δὲ φιλεσκεν.”

“He was a friend to mankind, for he loved them all.”

The following circumstance may sufficiently exemplify his generous and persevering ardour, in the pursuit of literature, an ardour, which obstacles only strengthened to overcome, “*ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.*” Residing in the country, at too great a distance from public libraries, he was often stopped in his researches for want of books not to be

found in the libraries in his neighbourhood, all of which were open to him, particularly that of his patron and friend, the friend of every species of goodness and liberality, the Earl of Courtown—of his brother, then Dean of Ferns, afterwards Bishop of Cork. Of Stephen Ram, Esq. of Ramsfort, who had a fine collection of select and valuable books. It however often happened, that books, which he wanted could not be found with any of his friends. He, on such occasions, either made an excursion to Dublin, to store his memory, and to make his notes, or like Doctor Primrose, though for a more laudable purpose, the beast was sent to the fair, and the narrator has known him, to sell a horse for ten guineas, which sum, he immediately sent to the late Mr. John Archer, then residing at 80, Dame-street, Dublin, (a man, who was the first to introduce an extensive variety of books in all sciences, and languages among his countrymen; and whose dealings were all marked by distinguished liberality) in payment for a copy of Gough's edition of Camden's *Britania*—*Ex uno disce omnes*. Let every young man of a liberal profession, thus cultivate letters, they will be an ornament, and a solace through life, and perhaps may also cause a man's memory to be respected, by those whose respect is valuable. At

all events, a real attachment to letters, lifts a man above the sordid views of life and all its meanness. It not only encreases the value of all other enjoyments, but it creates new enjoyments of its own. It makes a man agreeable to himself and enables him, to extend his agreeabilities beyond himself. It softens all the ills of life, and exalts all its blessings. It adorns the highest fortune, and, as will be seen in the case of Mr. Gordon, it enabled him, to recover the rank and consideration in life, which was lost, by the improvidence of an ancestor, and notwithstanding a most injudicious management of an ample income, to leave, it is hoped a valuable inheritance in the fruits of his memory, and the labours of his intellect, to his posterity. Neither religion, nor virtue, properly speaking, can exist among mankind without it. Devoid of learning, religion degenerates into blind fanaticism, or wild enthusiasm; and without it, virtue's features are savage and uncouth.

In this outline of Mr. Gordon's family concerns, may we be allowed to offer a tribute, *To γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θάνατος.* to the memory of a brave and generous youth, his eldest son, James George Gordon, who as Lieutenant in Lord Courtown's corps of yeoman cavalry, displayed so much courage and humanity in the rebellion of 1798, and so strongly attracted the attention



and kindness of the late veteran General Skirret, who commanded at that time in his neighbourhood, that he subsequently procured him a commission, and accompanied it with a letter (which is now with other documents of the General's in the narrator's possession) of the most kind and cordial advice and direction. *Fortes creantur fortibus.* This youth met his death leading up his division, to the attack of Fort Sandusky in Upper Canada, as his friend, General Skirret, junior, the son of his patron, did, leading on the too daring assault of Bergen-op-Zoom.

These and similar statements may appear puerile to some; but if they have a tendency, as the narrator means they should, to inculcate principles in boys, such as fathers would wish them to possess, the objection will not be formidable. Neither the opportunities, nor the capability of the narrator enable him to put forward a finished composition. He has none of the art of authorship, its formality or its pomp—not that he despises these things, because he knows not how to reach them; but he has been too much engaged, since his own boyhood, in teaching boys, to be now enabled to teach men. Those who want instruction least, will not be the first, he hopes, to complain of his deficiency. He does as well as he can, under the circumstances that impel him to the work. The generosity and candour, which he has

on most occasions, experienced in life, he trusts, will not be denied to him on this occasion, which has awakened all his sensibilities, and recalled the whole train of his own life, as well as that of his friends, in review to his mind.

There is a circumstance in the life of Mr. Gordon, barren as it was of incidents, which shews in a strong and pointed manner, how he was estimated by a great and independent mind. In 1807, when Mr. Fox was in power, he wrote to Mr. Gordon, and sent him an introduction to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, then Lord Lieutenant. Although this kindness was disappointed by the death of Mr. Fox, and the consequent shortness of his Grace's lieutenancy, no language of the narrator can reach the nobleness and grandeur of Mr. Fox's conduct on this occasion, as on most others. Hereditarily accustomed to the walks of greatness; yet unsophisticated by the intrigues which the struggles for greatness are said to generate, he turns his attention with a magnanimous simplicity, to an unambitious scholar in an obscure corner, whose only recommendation to him, was a kindred integrity in historic relation—a firmness in the cause of truth unjustly visited by neglect and obloquy. A noble example this; and the memory of it is fresh in the mind of his Grace the Duke of Bed-

ford; and the greatest prince on earth has most graciously recognised it.\*

The author of this narrative touches on any failing, or defect of Mr. Gordon's with filial reverence; but although he would shield the memory of his friend from any malignant criticism, the impartiality of his narrative demands that the whole truth should be told. "The Gods give us some faults to shew that we are men." An honest writer should however adopt the candour of the true critic; and although he may be forced by the current of his narration to confess some blemishes, "*Quas aut incuria fudit, aut humana parum cavit natura*," he should depict them so, as not to obscure the general excellency of his subject. It is said in language more powerful than human language, that "the spirit of a man sustaineth his infirmity," and happy he, who like Mr. Gordon, is pressed only by such small defects as are easily recovered from—who is stained by no flagrant immorality of conduct—no treachery of friendship—no action of dishonour—no pollution of mind. All whose habitudes were those of virtue, bottomed on religion. Whose life, in all its great features, was

\* When the foregoing was written, (July, 1819,) his present Majesty, Geo. IV. was Prince Regent.



not only unblemished, but of exemplary integrity and innocence. What though we may acknowledge, nay must confess, that he was gifted with a very slight degree only, of worldly prudence; and that many of the difficulties and exasperations which attended him through life, and were even among the proximate causes of his death, might have been avoided by a proper attention, and wise management of his pecuniary affairs. What though he did not avail himself of the kindness and cordiality manifested for him, by several men of the highest influence, in favour of himself and family, with the address and cleverness which distinguish and improve the fortunes of other men, we should notwithstanding acknowledge that such blemishes are most frequently found to adhere to the wisest and best men, who are for the most part lost to self, or absorbed as it were in intellectual pursuits, often overlook the objects nearest and dearest to them. Such was the complexion of Mr. Gordon—such his easy nature—such his implicit confidence in the goodness of Providence.

Almost all his pleasures were intellectual. For him the stores of ages, and the treasures of all climates, were spread out as a rich banquet. His enjoyments, like Dryden's lovers, were not confined to time or space. He sought and found them in every

age and in every country. He was "the heir of creation, and the world was his." He was prone to no sensual indulgence. He was indeed not abstemious, but he was temperate. He was satisfied with the plainest viands, almost to indifference; except, that he was as fond of a hot cake, as king Alfred; and as negligent of it, in the preparation; but when provided, he spared it not. His mind, in its flight "beyond this visible diurnal sphere" occasionally, though rarely, became subject to some illusions, or optical deceptions, akin to those visions which the Scotch call second sight. A mental malady, arising from a too great abstraction, and want of intercourse with the world. During the most of his life he was placed at too great a distance from a living conversation with such other minds as he could properly attach himself to, perfectly associate with, and become refreshed and refined by a rapid interchange of ideas. In candour too, we must allow that he was not formed for a general acquaintance and promiscuous intercourse with mankind. He was too diffident, unostentatious and slow—too retiring and indolent to please, or be pleased much on a slight acquaintance. He was too keenly sensible of the affectation and parade which so much display themselves in the intercourse of mankind, not even excepting the scientific and the learned. He was himself of so plain, sincere and

perfectly good faith, in every conversation and occasion of life, that he perhaps made too little allowance for even a ceremonial deficiency of it, in others. It is said that Scipio never spoke a lie even in jest, and the narrator firmly believes that Mr. Gordon never designed one in earnest.

There is a little incident of no importance, except as it may display the character of the man, in its native simplicity. Riding home from the narrator's house, (to which for the last twenty years, he generally paid a visit, or two, annually) many years since, (1807,) he was attacked on Tallaght-hill, by a body of foot-pads, and robbed of his money, his watch, and upper clothes. Having been dismissed without bodily injury, and ridden on a little, he suddenly recollected, that they had taken from him a favourite cane of little or no value to them. He turned back, shouted out, and requested they would restore his cane, which indeed they did. He then proceeded on his journey, in awkward plight enough, equipped in a ragged coat and tattered hat, which the robbers gave him, to the house of his friend, James Chritchley, Esq. of Grangebegg, in the county Kildare. Here having been refurnished, he proceeded next day, home to Killegny.



That Mr. Gordon was far from cultivating the graces of life, as Lord Chesterfield so forcibly admonishes is perfectly true ; and that he had an habitual peculiarity and *prima facie* awkwardness of manner, is not denied. This, in a great degree was attributable to his deficiency of sight. All men, however, catch somewhat of the tone, and manners of those, with whom they must most converse, and associate. The narrator often observed, that during the latter years of Mr. Gordon's life, his conversation and tone became deteriorated. While he lived at Marlfield in the neighbourhood of Courtown and Gorey, he had much more of the tone and manner of literary conversation and polite life, than subsequently. But no man ever possessed the fundamentals of true politeness more than he did. Always natural and unaffected, he was easy without effort, plain without rudeness, and peculiar without offence. He never imposed restraint on himself, or others—As he never meant to offend, he was not apt to suppose himself offended. He never attacked, or disoblige any man, who did not attack, or disoblige him—Then indeed he was perhaps somewhat too unmeasured in his resentment, and too lasting. We should, however, add, that he imagined the offence on the injury to be continued and unexpiated, as no man, on an acknow-

ledgement of an error, was more readily and sincerely appeased. How unfathomable, says Rochefaulcault, are the depths of self-love? How studiously do some men struggle to conceal low and unworthy motives, and to assume some justifiable pretext for the cold-blooded persecution of the memory of a man, whom having first provoked, they cannot even forgive his ashes?

About the year 1796, the late Hon. and Right Rev. Thomas Stopford, Lord Bishop of Cork, who inherited a full share of the exalted and characteristic generosity of his noble family, presented Mr. Gordon to the living of Canaway, in the diocese of Cork. In 1799, His Grace, the present Archbishop of Dublin, then Bishop of Ferns, having for several years before, been favourably impressed by Mr. Gordon's exemplary life, learning and intellectual endowments, in the true spirit, and meaning of a Christian Bishop, presented him to the living of Killegny, in the diocese of Ferns. His Grace's letters evince how highly he esteemed Mr. Gordon, during an acquaintance of many years. Under present circumstances, it will be allowed without any suspicion of adulation to say, that his Grace appeared and acted in his episcopal function (a trust the most important and sacred,) as one of those lights, which providence for a season,



exhibits as an exemplar to mankind—*O si sic omnes.* They of his own order, it is hoped, will not be fonder to praise, than to imitate his truly pastoral attention to old and meritorious clergymen. Then the Church of the establishment will co-incide with the design of its institution, and the spirit of its doctrine; and be a real public concern to advance the cause of Christian faith by the most powerful motive of Christian example in its practice.\*

Fortunate is the diocese of Leighlin and Ferns† in its late, and its present bishop, administered, as it is by an enlightened discernment, and benevolent attention, as will more fully appear in the sequel of this narrative. The amount of these preferments to Mr. Gordon may, *communibus annis*, have been six or seven hundred a year; but they came late in life; and his habits although plain and inexpensive were im-

\* Since the above was written (July 1819,) His Grace, Doctor Euseley Cleaver, Archbishop of Dublin, has paid the great debt of nature; and now mingles with the spirits of the just made perfect, where human praise, or blame avails him not; but, where the uprightness and integrity of his intentions, and the illustrious example of his life, will speak for him, as angels, “trumpet tongued.”

† Since these sheets were sent to the press, the Right Hon. and Right Rev. Percy Jocelyn, D. D. Bishop of Leighlin and Ferns, has been translated to the diocese of Clogher.



provident and negligent, from want of knowledge in the daily transactions of life ; and, he was not ever able during the latter part of his life, to completely redeem the embarrassments, which he necessarily contracted in the former part.

Having thus summarily drawn the outline of his fortune and his manners, we are now to say a few words of his modes and habits of study, and of his general opinions. His custom was to read his author leisurely and thoroughly : he then walked out, revolved and digested the subject in his mind, and made himself master of it, in a connected, orderly manner. Thus adopting the fashion, which Swift attributes to Pope,

“ Pope walks and courts the muse.”

Like Henry in the composition of his History of England, he was thus enabled to complete his work, without the intervention of a second copy. Nothing can more clearly and satisfactorily manifest the full and perfect knowledge which he had of his subject, than that he composed so long a work from the fullness of his mind and the stores of his memory.—Scarcely a blot—few interlineations, additions, or alterations are to be found in his manuscripts consisting of nearly three thousand very closely written pages.

Like the bee, he collected the materials from various quarters; and so mixed and new moulded them, that the composition, although it savours of the flowers whence collected, has, by the operation of his art and industry, acquired a new, a racy, and an embalming quality of its own.

Early imbued by the Greek and Latin classics, he too much undervalued modern poets. Of all profane authors, he esteemed Homer most—Milton next—then Virgil and Horace. Shakspeare\* he did not

\* Against Shakspeare it is objected by the greatest of all critics (Doctor Johnson) that “he seems to write without any moral purpose.” The Doctor, indeed, whose mental acumen was only inferior to Shakspeare’s, urges this charge, as well he may, with a tender solicitude, and speedily too discharges it, by observing, that from his writings “a system of moral duty may be selected.” Shakspeare is then, therefore, as didactic as life requires, and in the manner, by which life may be most efficaciously edified. Although his flight be apparently vagrant, and his course disorderly, truth never forsakes his pinions, or ceases to direct his view. She presents herself to him, as it were *suâsponte*, as Venus to her son Æneas, and he becomes at once smitten and inspired with her charms. Smitten and inspired he certainly is, and he makes his inspiration to be felt: and inculcates a love for virtue and goodness of every species, more effectually, than the ablest Professors *e cathedrâ*, have ever done. Society is delighted, refined and improved by his writings, “*plenius et melius Chrysippo, aut Crantore.*” May we not, therefore, candidly conclude, that he designedly interweaves the *apta, et idonea vitæ*, with the web of his fable and the development of his characters. He knew that the moral medicines of mankind often require to be gilded, that by preventing the patients nausea, they may produce the due effect intended by the prescription. Shakspeare is the writer of all others, who inculcates a truly impartial, universal

properly appreciate in considering him second to any writer of any age, or country. Dryden, and Pope, and Goldsmith; Gray, and Campbell; Rogers, and Burns, and Southey, were among his favourites. Virgil, and Horace, and Milton, he had by heart, and almost all the fine passages of the Iliad. This foundation he laid in youth, and he never much added to it afterwards. He used to insist too much that modern poets only dilate and weaken the strength and texture of poetic imagery; and that it was for the most part time lost, to give those hours to their works, which may be so much more delectably bestowed on the great originals, whence all these pig-

morality. Other writers, and the theatres of other nations, ancient and modern, address themselves, exclusively, or peculiarly to some distinct class, or order of mankind, with a view to flatter either the higher or lower classes and ranks of life; and thus injure the best bonds of society, by false and treacherous pictures, by low covert insinuations and unsocial conclusions, that the miseries of mankind and the disorders of society, arise from the inequalities of human condition, more than from their own vicious propensities. Thus the drama of other writers instead of inculcating a legitimate sense of moral duty and social order, engender envy on one side, and contempt on the other. Shakspeare alone, of true British breed, embraces all ranks and degrees of men, without flattery and without prejudice. In his magic mirror there is no distortion in little or in big. Every man from the king to the peasant, may see his duties depicted there, and the mutual dependence of all on all, with a wholesome impartiality, and poetic justice. In his mode of inculcating morality, as in all his modes, he excels all other men, he coincides with nature in her spring. Buds and flowers "spread their beauty to the sun," and imperceptibly form into fruits, delicious to the taste, and useful to the support of life.



mies draw their little wealth. This, to be sure, is too much a wholesale undistinguishing criticism ; but the self-love of poetry mocks all criticism, and new cobwebs of the brain will be ever a weaving.

In all his researches—in the whole system of his life, he was more studious to form clear ideas and just conclusions, than to make any pompous, sententious display of the steps that lead to them, *Verum et decens*, truth and propriety, were the great objects which he sought after and cultivated in life. The critic will not complain that Mr. Gordon's stile does not make his subject sufficiently intelligible. He cannot, however, be so easily excused from the opposite charge of never leaving that which was clear to himself, obscure to his readers : and this is a fault, which most men are not too prone to pardon. People love to find in a book something beyond the level of ordinary apprehension—something, which may cause a ripple on the smooth surface of the mind, and seem at least to apply a flattering stimulus to self-complacency ; although it be not sufficient to awaken indolence to mental exercise, or dulness to the activity of thinking. Occasional difficulties, and some peculiarities in an author, serve like the swells and turns in a road to keep the attention more alive

and observant of the beauties of the country, than a dead level, and a direction ever in a right line.

Passing from the poets to the historians.—Thucydides was his favourite. Him he regarded as the father of authentic history, *quæque ipse vidit*, &c.—He esteemed him as the friend of rational liberty, and his book as a school for statesmen, in which they are taught by powerful example and clear inference, the danger of tyranny, as well as its cruelty: and that above all, the cowardly tyranny of demagogues, sharpened, as it always is, by their own insecure and precarious authority, is most to be dreaded—most to be avoided. On such occasions men may well indeed “fly from petty tyrants to the throne:” but wise men fly only to the throne of the laws. Mitford,\*

\* May we here presume to offer a slight criticism on a passage in Mr. Mitford's history of Greece, chapter 18th, section 5th, he states, and refers to Thucydides, that the Lacedæmonians sent Gylippus alone in aid of the Syracusans. Mr. M. is in this passage, evidently mistaking. It would appear, that he is misled by the drift of Alcibiades's speech, who then in exile, roused the Spartan councils against his countrymen, the Athenians, and their allies. Thucydides does not warrant the position, that Gylippus was sent alone. See Thucyd. lib. 6, chap. 93,—“και τοπαρχαυτικά, και τοις εν Σικελια πεμπειν τινα τιμωριαν, και Γυλιππον προσταξαντες αρχοντα τοις Συρακοσίοις εκελευον μετ' εκεινων, και των Κορινθίων βουλευομενον ποιειν οπη εκ των παροντων μαλιστα και ταχιστα τις ωφελεια ηξει τοις εκει—Again, lib. 6, chap. 103,—αυτος μεν (Γυλιππος *scilicet*) και Πυθην ο Κορινθιος, ναυσι σποιν μεν Λακονικαιν—And yet still, lib. 7, chap. 1,—και ο μεν Γυλιππος αναλαβων των τε σφετερων ναυ των και επιβιαντων τους ωπλισμενους επτακοσious.” To the same purpose Diadorus Siculus, lib. 13, and subsequent compilers, as Rollin, Sir Walter Raleigh,

Ferguson, Littleton, Somerville, Henry, and Coxe, he regarded as real historians, who, guided by the polar star of truth, conduct their readers with felicitous skill and learned labour through the clouds of error and the dark gloom of faction, to a clear and comprehensive view of their subjects.

The stile and manner of an historian, he deemed perhaps too much a secondary and subordinate consideration; and therefore neither Livy nor Hume stood so high in his estimation as they do in general opinion. To Gibbon's research and luminous arrangement, he gave the highest praise, as well as to the general choice of his topics; but he despised his sententious affectation, the holiday-dress of his stile; the gloss of which becomes soon faded by continual recurrence and daily use. He still more despised his cold, subtle, and studied infidelity. He knew not how an understanding elevated by learning and philosophy, as Mr. Gibbon's certainly was, could really entertain such false and uncomfortable notions; and he finally concluded that they were not really entertained, and that the profession of them was merely a

&c. with the exception of Justin, who writes—“*mittiturque Gylippus solus, in quo instar omnium Lacedæmoniorum erat.*” A fine turned sentence, but quite unfounded in fact.—[See Gylippus's character in Plutarch's life of Nicias.]



display of literary vanity—a lie in sentiment, to attract attention and to make a name. The common and beautiful order of nature and reason is forsaken for a while, and men gape in stupid surprize at an unexpected irregularity, or an unusual deformity. The finest face, or the pages of Pope, or the luminous splendours of Johnson are sometimes neglected, to stare at a wen, or to be puzzled by a connundrum. The varied picture of the finest landscape, or the endless delight of perusing Shakspeare, is occasionally forsaken to admire a basaltic pillar, or to unravel a charade. Such pleasure is of short duration—

“It steals but a glance from time.”

Nature and reason quickly resume their empire, bring back the mind to its proper course, and restore religion to its proper sovereignty. Considering Robertson at once as a writer and an historian, he esteemed him, as Pope does Dryden,

“Whose long majestic march and harmony divine,”

are calculated to delight and improve all readers. Of Steele, and Swift, and Addison he thought highly. The narrator sometimes presumed to maintain the superiority of the great Doctor Johnson above them all; and to consider him, as equal, if not superior to all mo-

ral writers and critics of his own, or any other country.\*

As to the great theological writers, and divines, the reproach, which Thirlby made to his great relative, Bentley, applies with equal force to him. He appeared to avoid conversation on the topic. He felt not sufficiently strong. The narrator however is well assured, that he was not so uninformed even on this subject, as he appeared to be. That he was not better informed, is unquestionably a great deficiency, and a just reproach. He however certainly had much of the substance of the volumes of the great Doctors, Clarke, Tillotson, and Taylor, floating in his memory. In early life, he adopted another course of reading and study; and although, at one time (1798,) he

\* To affect any eulogy of Doctor Johnson would appear to an Englishman, as an encomium of Hercules would to an ancient Greek—presumptuous and unnecessary—a pitiable and futile attempt “to guard a title that was rich before.” Unhappily such is not the case in Ireland. Many Irishmen, even of letters, treat the Doctor’s memory, with a boyish, idle, ill-informed, supercilious contempt—men, who indeed know his character only from some half-told anecdotes of occasional irritation, sudden eruptions of a too great and wounded sensibility, without the causes which produced the explosion, or a knowledge of the circumstances by which it was accompanied, presume to condemn a man, who illustrates by a full and steady blaze of intellectual splendour, his country, his age, and human nature itself; and whose fame spreads *per ora virum* with civilized life and polished language, through all the nations of the world.

lost all his manuscripts, the accumulated labour of many years, he subsequently, after an interval of about eight years, and the completion and publication of other works—" *veteris servans vestigia flammæ*," returned *con amore* with renewed vigour of mind, and a more ripened understanding to his original and favourite pursuit of geographical history; and he has left his work complete, as a bequest to his daughters. Of this work, as we mean to speak more at large hereafter in the account of his manuscripts, we shall now only say, that it is not written for any distinct profession of men solely, or appropriately. Its nature is general; and men of every profession may find delight, and improvement in its perusal. The philosopher, the man of business, the man of letters, the legislator, may any, and all of them, meet curious and useful information spread through its pages, which they may not find in any other work of the same kind and extent. But an inhabitant of these islands, by being enabled, in a comparatively easy manner, to contrast his own condition with that of an inhabitant of any other country, will find most delight, and the greatest lessons of contentment, in its perusal. Such a study is calculated immediately and certainly to inflame the *amor patriæ* of Britons. If Britons take a review of mankind in the various nations and climates of the world, they will have little to envy.



In most other nations, they will perceive the physical ills, to which climate exposes mankind, enhanced and exasperated in a manifold degree, by the much more oppressive inflictions of human institutions. They will see poor human nature degraded and oppressed by the most disgusting and cruel superstitions. Throughout all Asia and Africa, with the exception which Britain affords—throughout most of America, and much of Europe, they will find the great majority of mankind, living in a crouching and precarious dependence on the always capricious and often sanguinary will of a few tyrants. Scarcely in any other region of the earth, but their own, will Britons find any guarantee, any law, that is an emanation of the public reason, sufficiently strong, uniform and certain, to protect the public rights against all aggression; and yet, possessing these qualities, of a spirit sufficiently mitigated and condescending to interpose its shield in favour of the weakest individual, and to cover him most effectually from any self-willed, capricious attack, of the mightiest man in the land.

Although Mr. Gordon was a steady preacher of the word of his great Master, and that he composed several sermons clear, impressive, piquant and original, he never perplexed himself or his hearers with the quarrelsome tortuosities of dogmas unintelligible, or

hard to be understood. Yea, all of you be doers of the word, and love one another, was the beginning and the end, the *alpha* and *omega* of his preaching and his practice. Thus his religion animating his principles, governing his practice and actuating his conduct, spread calmness and peace over his conscience through life, and enabled him, in full possession of his intellectual faculties, to the last moment of his existence, to resign his being in this world, without a pang, or a disturbing sigh, in perfect charity with all mankind, on the 10th April 1819, in his seventieth year.

It now remains, that we give in the same rapid, but faithful manner, an account of his publications and of the manuscripts which he has left. The first of them is his *Terraquea*, or memoirs geographical and historical. Of this work he had in 1798, published four volumes, when, at the suggestion of a clerical friend, still alive, and by the advice and encouragement of his printer, he too inconsiderately undertook to write a succinct account of that distressing period. Unfortunately (should we say so?) for his children, he performed his undertaking too much in consonance with the dignified independence of his own mind, to give satisfaction to any party. He partook not of the passions and enthusiasm of the time;



and he wrote as a philosopher at a season when he might have ensured his promotion and made the fortune of his family by writing as a partizan. His prejudices, as well as his reason and his sense of duty, gravitated towards the glorious fabric of the British constitution. He saw that violated and defiled by all parties. He consulted not his power, but the disposition of his heart, in attempting to allay or soften the phrenzy of the times. The motto of his book—

“ Truths would you teach, and save a sinking land,  
“ All fear, none aid you, and few understand,”

was alive in his memory, as an apothegm of instruction for others, more than for himself. Hume relates that Harrison, the author of *Oceana*, had too much confidence in human reason, and indeed so had Mr. Gordon. He deemed that as it ought, it would be, omnipotent among mankind. He found, and his posterity may still find, that it is in full force only among a few; but that the thick clouds of hereditary prejudice, and the deadly virus of anti-social and conflicting factions, hang over and begloom the minds, and distort the affections of the greater number; and that the writer who undertakes to present the naked truth, with candour and impartiality, to a public so constituted, imposes on himself a duty of great difficulty and hazard. Neither party



receives, or is amended by such unpalatable impartiality; and he who offers it is condemned as a victim by both. It is said that boys are not grateful to their instructors; but the observation is more generally applicable to men. Boys soon outgrow their juvenile distastes, and for the most part become respectful and fond of their masters: but men are actuated by a stubborn pride and inbred prejudice, which will not bear the probe of reproof, how just or useful soever, if the prescription be not accompanied by some severe stroke of adversity. In the storm of civil war, the predominating maxim is, that he who is not for me in every thing, is against me in all. The violation of every law, human and divine, is sanctioned by a boisterous zeal for a party. He who reprobates such conduct in his own party, or acknowledges any good property in the opponents, is set down as a hollow and false friend, governed by his fears; or some other equally unjust and unworthy motive is attributed to him. Where is the man, who, like Mr. Gordon, would stand erect on such an occasion, and dare to do justice to all parties, with the calm impartiality of a true historian? At such a season, other men may have written with a like unbiassed mind; but the publication was delayed to after times. We must allow that Mr. Gordon did not sufficiently appreciate this posthumous courage.

This work however went through two large editions in England and in Ireland; and is not now to be found at the booksellers. Even at the time, it extorted from the superciliousness of those dark and dangerous (dark because anonymous—dangerous because self-interested, purveyors to the public appetite for censure ;

*Discit enim citius, meminit que libentius illud,  
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat & veneratur,)*

tribunals, the reviews, a praise for integrity, far above any praise possibly resulting from any effort of the intellect. As the effervescence of zeal evaporates, as the voice of faction sinks into the calm of peace, its value becomes every day higher, in rational and impartial estimation. “ Sons shall blush, whose fathers were its foes.”—It was the first and only work of a general nature, to lift its voice in truth and candour to expose and put to shame the abominations and enormities of the enrages of both sides, with more than a disinterested fidelity, and a fearless integrity, which should for ever endear the author’s memory to the wise and good. He presented, or he intended to present, topics of mutual forgiveness to both parties, by shewing them, that each of them had fallen into intemperate and cruel excesses of conduct. The aim—

*f*



the object of his book, was evidently to allay and reconcile the angry passions of his countrymen, and to unite, in one common bond of citizenship, the whole family of the British people. He indeed always contended in the true spirit of British liberty, and Christian feeling, that even in their errors, his countrymen, as children of the state, are entitled to a paternal treatment and indulgence.—He associated with them in much of the intercourse of life; and he knew by long and intimate experience the fidelity and generosity of their nature, and how susceptible they are of sudden impressions whether of good or ill. He lamented the long and egregious mistakes in the training and management of such valuable elements. He could not divest himself of the opinion, that they would be as good subjects of the law—as amenable, and as industrious, orderly and honest, as they undoubtedly are, as kind and sincere, as their fellow-citizens of England, had they been subjected to the same kind of government. But alas, this has not been the case: and we should not attribute to natural and irreclaimable disposition, those defects, imperfections and vices of character, which are equitably to be charged to the account of injudicious, and unsocial laws. On every occasion of danger, or disagreement, the first question of an Englishman is—Jack, how stands the law—is the law in



your favour?—"for we do fear the law." If so, all's well.—But "an arrogant piece of flesh lords it over" poor Paddy; and the first question of an Irishman on such an occasion, is not how stands the law? but how inclines the squire—how is his honour affected towards you? Is he your friend? If so, Pat, you are safe. Thank God, this state of things is on the wane and fading from society; but there are still too many and deep traces of it remaining. The great landed proprietors of Ireland are, for the most part, absentees—non-residents. Their Irish affairs are conducted by agents having no proprietary interest in the soil. Many of the gentry, who do reside, prefer their individual will, or some paltry, apprehended convenience, to the deep and permanent value of habitual submission to the law; and in their own practice too often set an example of the law's infraction. Such as in the case of smuggling, illicit distillation, the eluding of payment, or throwing all possible embarrassments against the payment of tythes. Endeavouring to shift the odium of rack-rents, the *prima mali labes*, from themselves, against the parson or the exciseman; and on the other hand complaining of the vices of the commonality, as the bars to all national improvement, as if the instruments of practical wisdom, were the true, and only impediments to the adop-

tion of good sense and right feeling. It is thus, that some men travel in a circle, and make one part of their injustice, an excuse for the other. It is thus, too, that the beneficent wisdom of the law is too often not only thwarted, and rendered nugatory; but made oppressive and vindictive—*quid leges sine moribus vanæ proficiunt*. Whenever Ireland shall have enjoyed a resident gentry, equal and social laws, when all her magistrates shall have been appointed and recognised by law; for, as Hooker says, “the voice of law, is the voice of God;” her morals, her learning and manners will be found to correspond with the generous elements of her people. “Read,” says a philosophical poet, “a nation’s history in its eyes.” Who, then, that has known Ireland, and that has seen, or read of other countries, thirty years ago, and can see, or read now, but must acknowledge her improved condition out of all proportion with other countries? The repeal and relaxation of so many of the anti-social, penal laws, re-awaked the stupified faculties of her people. Those barriers to national happiness and improvement being removed, every social advantage has flowed on the land in just proportion, and will continue to flow, as the work proceeds. Proceed it will. Reason and utility ensure its progress to full completion. Provident fathers, cordial neighbours, and good citizens, are its offspring—social



prosperity its effects—generous emulation, gentlemanly pride, kind domestic feelings, and natural strength, its consequences. It is easy, and to a weak head or a bad heart, it is alluring, to plant a man's foot in a faction, and to regard a fellow-citizen as an enemy; but the true patriot and the true Christian prefers the interest of his country to that of any party, and though he will in turn be abused by all, like the immortal Grattan, his mind is bent only on peaceable and social adjustments. Let Greece, or America hold out to their gullible admirers, their banners of freedom, inscribed on one side, with the titles of religious liberty and civil equality, and shew on the other a band of miserable helots, hunted like beasts for sport, or a no less miserable group of enchained slaves, staked as a wager at hazard, by a drunken American patriot. But let the sons of Britain—all the subjects of her wide empire, unfold the code of her laws, to animate, or to shame the nations—to extinguish all kinds, names, and degrees of slavery, from the face of the earth; “and gather in its shade the living world:” for indeed not only man, but the very brute creation, have rights under and are protected by British law, which contains the salient principle of excellence in all things, and a recuperative spirit, redeeming all past mistakes.



Mr. Gordon's next work is a history of Ireland, in two volumes octavo. Of this work we may confidently say, that it is what it pretends to be; a clear and distinct relation of all the valuable and well authenticated facts of Irish history, in a just and impartial manner. This work passed through two editions, and is now rarely to be found, except in private libraries. His next and last published work is a history of the British Islands, in four volumes octavo. This work is excellently adapted to give a clear and correct view of the general history of the British system of islands, from the earliest period to our own time, and would be advantageous to the higher classes of schools; as also to recal and refresh, in a luminous manner, the facts of British history fading on the memory of those who have studied it in more detailed and extensive publications.

We come now to speak of the Manuscripts which he has left. These, with the four volumes already published, complete the memoirs geographical and historical of the entire globe. He has also left an historical memoir of the church of Ireland, not quite perfected.

The plan which he pursued in the execution of his great work, is, in the first place, to describe all

the prominent features, and distinguishing characteristics of the earth, and its inhabitants. He then descends to the description of particular countries.—His researches appear accurate and extensive; his plan satisfactory and full. The work has a cast of originality running through it, that distinguishes it from any work of the kind hitherto published, and evinces it to be the offspring of a mind, which having long and powerfully considered, had well prepared and concocted its subject. The work is therefore not got up in the spirit of a book-maker, who stitches various shreds torn from the writings of others; and hangs them as it were, without comparing and weighing their coherence and value unconnectedly together, in form of a motley, heterogeneous tissue of tawdry patch-work. He mounts to the sources and original authorities—he compares, weighs, and selects from them, all the discriminating features illustrative of his subject. Although the web be confessedly and necessarily of foreign materials, its texture is all his own—*hoc stabat, hoc est imitandus*. In this he deserves praise—in this he is to be imitated.

The narrator has since the death of his friend (from April to July 1819,) devoted most of his hours of relaxation from the duties of his profession, with all the calmness, and impartiality, that his mind allows,



to the examination and comparison of these manuscripts, with the treatises of Guthrie, of Payne, of Pinkerton, and of Playfair, (with whose work, he has had for many years, some acquaintance,) and he has confident hope, that whenever the public shall have a fair opportunity of deciding—they will agree with him, that his friend's production, has advantages and excellencies not to be found in them. It is not his purpose, nor is it the right of a person circumstanced as he is, obscure and unknown, invidiously or detractingly to speak of these writers. They are valuable and eminent compilers, particularly Pinkerton and Playfair. However, since they wrote, new information has been acquired. The old and the new world have been more fully explored—regions then entirely unknown, or imperfectly known, have been since visited by scientific and literary men, with all appliances and means to acquire and communicate intelligent information. The world, if I may so express myself, has been extended by the enterprising research of more modern travellers. New Strabos and new Pausaniases, endowed with all the accessions, which time has added to science, since the days of these ancients, have thrown a clearer and a steadier light on geographical history. The illustrious Humboldt, and our still more illustrious countryman, Clarke, (more illustrious as displaying equal science and immeasura-



bly more learning, on ground much more difficult, because much oftener trodden, where readers cannot be entertained by stupendous novelty, or dazzled by a display of easily observed, but attractive because strange phenomena,) with a host of other travellers of great, though inferior celebrity, have in our days, visited the new and the old world. Of the wealth of all these writers Mr. Gordon has ably and fully availed himself, as is evident by the references to their works in his M.SS. Independently too of this consideration, conclusive as it is, to authorize a publication of them, it is and will always be of value to a reader to know how the same subject presents itself to; and may be handled by different minds. It will always afford delight and improvement to all readers of sound intellect and good taste, to survey the effects of new combinations, and various modifications, which the materials common to all may be made to assume, when arranged and displayed by a man, who, like our author, had, by reading, by study and reflection, fully enabled himself to treat it, in a masterly manner. This work enables us to compare the different modes of human life—to weigh different systems of opinion. It introduces us to an acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, as they are variously modified by climate, or human institutions—It exhibits a bold,

connected, and panoramic view of all the great features, distinctions, curiosities and productions of the earth, with the epocs, and revolutions of nations. We come now to speak of his manuscript memoir of the church of Ireland, which he has left unfinished. Attached to the Establishment as Mr. Gordon was by all the motives of duty and interest, of reason and prejudice, he nevertheless thought that it requires the unceasing vigilance of the supreme authority of the state to prevent the inroads of abuse, to shape its course, and to model its conduct agreeably to the changing tone and progress of human reason, and the consequent wants of society. He thought, that some settled regulation should be adopted to secure old, and respectable clergymen a preference at least to appointments in the Church. He agreed that liberal birth, and education, and the spirit of a gentleman are solid requisites in the collective character of a clergyman ; but he did not agree, that even these things should exclude the reward of services, so that promotion in the church should be actually, and in practice, a private consideration, to be decided *per saltum*, without any reference to the merits and service of the nominee. He therefore thought that a parliamentary enquiry into the state of the church, occasionally, would be of great service to the cause of truth and public morals. He deemed it a fortunate circumstance for this



empire, that the hierarchy is indissolubly bound up with the civil establishment, as he knew not by what other provision of human wisdom, the clashing of these authorities can be so effectually avoided. Although he never fell into the silly sophism which confounds the establishment of religion with the soul and substance of religion itself, he was decidedly of opinion, that the legalized establishment of religion, and the incorporation of ecclesiastical magistrates, with the other public authorities, mainly contribute to the maintenance and spread of liberally religious sentiments, and of a generous morality throughout society. Maintaining, however, the balance of his mind in just equipoise, he concluded that an establishment designed and instituted for the advantage of society, partakes of the nature of society itself, and should not be considered as bound by an irrevocable law, excluding it from a fair participation in the growing improvements of society. As the improvements of society are gradual and tentative—silently and insensibly revolutionary in their nature and progress, he thought that all public establishments should be so also; and that their being so considered and so conducted, precluded all apprehension of tumultuary and revolutionary violence. He was not disposed to condemn establish-



ments, as things useless to the manhood of society, and which society having outgrown, no longer needs, and would even do well to reject and destroy them, as monastic, unsocial incumbrances. His philosophy taught him better; and he saw in the overthrow of establishments, only a voluntary, rash, and wicked anticipation of the decrepitude of age; or rather a presumptuous, insane return to the imbecility of childhood, the infancy of society. Wisdom, he well knew, has always two extremes to combat and bear up against: on the one hand, she must encounter the blind admirers of antiquity, "*annosa volumina vatum*," and the friends of every abuse; and on the other she must maintain herself against the empirical dogmatism of petticoat philosophers, and self-plumed enthusiasts, who utterly abandon the realities of life, and would build the whole structure of society and government on the idle chimeras of inexperienced heads. The course between these two adverse follies is indeed *parvo discrimine lethi*: but wisdom must make good her passage, and she can do so by firmly grasping the helm, and steadily holding on her course in the middle space. Establishments were in their origin, improvements on the *then* state of society. Let the principle of improvement, which gave them birth, preside over their existence, and they will run on imperishably through ages, as banks of

accumulation, from which posterity may draw the best principles of religion, science, and letters. He was deeply impressed with the conviction, that every sect of religionists having power so to do (not recognized and identified with the state,) would act as rivals to, or disturbers of, the state. He too well knew how deep and how salutary religious impressions are in the minds of mankind, to conclude that the ministers of a predominant religion should be left to float at large in society; to maintain their holds over the minds and consciences of its citizens, while those ministers themselves have no legal appropriate share in the public establishments of their country. He was too great a friend to toleration and peace, not to set the ministers of a predominant religion entirely at their ease in social connexion with the state. He knew that no such connexion exists in America; but he did not therefore deem her situation more happy, fortunate or wise. He thought it belongs to this empire, to set the example, not only to America, but to all other countries, of internal and domestic legislation, and that only shallow politicians, men flushed with the self-importance and intoxication of sudden riches, or with the vanity of unfledged knowledge, would propose America, as a model. Britain, he would say, is surely right in interweaving her religion into the



system of her political constitution. She is thus enabled to tolerate all sects, and to maintain complete controul over the ministers of her own religion; and to obviate all the dangers arising from a divided authority. The scheme of her government is thus adjusted in perfect conformity to the order of society itself, duly participating in all its natural elements. The interests of all, are thus substantially and firmly linked together, and blended in one harmonious compound. She has solved the problem, which has so long, and will so much longer still, perplex and weaken other nations. "The harmonious moderation, (see Laing's hist. Scot. vol. 3, page 289,) which is observable in America from the shores of the Atlantic, to the banks of the Ohio," may be as clearly observed and with much more impressive and edifying phenomena in Britain. It may moreover be observed, that British moderation ensures a greater portion of good public and private morals. Is much more congenial to all rational propensities, and intellectual advancement, and improvement of all descriptions than the random course at present pursued in America. The learned author (Mr. Laing) seems on this occasion, to unaccountably forsake his great intellectual acumen and expansive understanding. He states, that men may choose their religious instructors in America, as they do their medical or legal advisers.



The right is not disputed in this empire more than in America. The difference is, that with us, the religious instructors of the establishment at least must be (and it is admitted to be a defect, that all are not) themselves instructed, by a previous course of regulated study and discipline. Medical and legal doctors are, we presume, even in America, subjected to some previous course of study and probation, before they are allowed to launch into life, to tamper with the health and fortunes of their fellow-citizens. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, is an approved maxim of homely wisdom, ratified by all experience, although sometimes even great and learned philosophers overlook its value. It argues a low, rustic, clownish, unimproved state of society, where quacks in any of the liberal professions, are prevalent.—But to establish quackery by law, or to leave the thing unprovided against by the laws, institutions and regulations of society, is not the part of a wise legislation, which always (*legibus emendat*) looks forward to the improvement of the coming generations. The religious peace, which it is, as it were triumphantly boasted, that America enjoys, is really not a lively, animating, emulative peace pregnant with the improvement of society; but a dull, incurious, unintellectual, Turkish sloth, stupidly content with mere animal gratification. The American clergy (should we call them such?) con-

sole their congregations less by their holiness, than by a mean, quiescent, servile submission to the ignorant preconceptions, of their unconnected, unchurch-like congregations; and in nothing elevate or adorn their country, or illustrate themselves by genius, talents, or learning. Their religious instructors are rather begging petitioners by licence, than doctors of the Church of Christ by legal authority. The Americans' horror of the priesthood has so begloomed their minds and overshadowed their understandings, that their laws and institutions leave their people so naked and exposed to the vile arts and seduction of ignorant cant, and cunning hypocrisy, that genius or wisdom, or learning can never take root among them. That America may hereafter emerge from this next to Cimmerian darkness, is not denied; but she must change, or rather adopt a system, and pursue the course, which has elevated other nations; and which now elevates Britons "beyond all Greek, beyond all Roman fame."

Why should the political constitution of America be extolled in any respect, as a model of excellence? In what does its merit consist? What practical or theoretical superiority can it boast? In its leading features, it is British to be sure; but it is British sadly caricatured, mutilated, and distorted. The



state of the population in America—its fewness, and thinness compared with the vast extent of its territory, render it easier to supply the mere animal wants of a growing family there, than in most parts of Europe. The same attraction exists in many other countries. It is a blessing not attributable to the political constitution, which is by no means calculated to remove or soften the evils of poverty, and those ills, which in all countries, by the predispositions of Providence attend on the inequality of mankind. In no country in the world is the insolence of wealth harsher or more disgusting to an ingenuous mind, than in America. There indeed *et genus & virtus, nisi cum re vilior alga*. There indeed “laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law.” America has not sufficiently recovered from her anger, just undoubtedly in its causes, and nobly vindicated in the result. So far the aspirations of every manly mind will go with America. But surely the prolongation of anger is humiliating and derogatory to a state of acknowledged independence. Anger now looks like the puff of self-importance at the acquirement of something undeserved, unearned, and un hoped for. It is an obstacle to the calm adjustment of her civil and political system, conformably to the settled analogies and universal propensities of the human mind.

The spirit and tone of her institutions, seem rather calculated to continue and confirm, than to correct and improve, the vulgarity of her manners. When her knowledge shall have acquired the ripeness and circumspection of age, she may possibly discover, that hereditary honours are useful to secure, embody, transmit, and enhance the acquisitions of society. That the glory of her fathers can, in no other so animating a form, descend to her children, and spread an established and lasting dignity—an illuminating brightness, cheering and warm, over her land. That the morality of her citizens, her literary acquirements, and intellectual refinement, will be more certainly ensured, when her establishments shall have imparted a public and legalized support to the ministers of religion; and through them, to religion itself; without which all pretences to morality are false and hollow. America may, in some future time, discover that an established church is an ordonnance of God—an institution by special revelation from heaven, not to be left to the dark and capricious acceptance of individuals, and never to be neglected with impunity. That the bonds of her union must be drawn much closer, that the links of her own confederation must be turned again on the anvil, and forged anew by abler legislators, than she can yet boast of; and the power of her legislature much strengthened and sim-



plified by converting the present *quasi legantine* character of her representatives into full and perfect legislators, liberally confided in, and elected because they have a solid, rooted, and unshakeable ground of attachment to and stake in their country's prosperity; and for a span of time sufficient to give stability and consistence to their enactments. That her executive must be reformed from its feebleness, and placed beyond all chance of corruption, or temptation by any foreign state; and rendered hereditary, in order for ever to preclude the enormous dangers of its becoming, in future times, an apple of discord for contending factions. That her judges must add the spirit of gentlemen to their knowledge of law; and her priests (*soi disant*) a knowledge of letters to their spirit of godliness—That she must have formed, and intimately connected with the vital *stamina* of her constitution many assemblages of learned men—many academies, colleges, and universities.—That she must have wiped out the deep stain of domestic slavery, and trade in human blood—That she must have liberalized her liberty, purified her morals, and established her clerical order—if not by a system of doctrine, at least by a system of learning, connection, and discipline. That until she shall have thus changed her course, remodeled and improved her institutions, and begot a more liberal, confiding and generous spirit in the whole

system of her domestic polity, she can have no title to be mentioned, as an instructress and exemplar to other nations. Indeed she seems in most of the great essentials of wise and enlarged legislation to be but little, if at all, before the worst of the European governments, always excepting Turkey, which although having dominion in Europe, is Asiatic in principle and constitution; and Spain, which appears to be bowed down in stupid submission to a benighted, un-mixed and unalloyed hierocracy.

Mr. Gordon deemed the most enlarged comprehensiveness in the articles of the Church, consistent with the essential doctrines of Christianity, to be the surest and most advantageous mode of producing the greatest unity and steadiness in essential and substantial religion, and that all those Christians, whose exalted piety and understanding give them the lead among mankind, now perfectly agree among themselves in essential and substantial religion—that how far soever they may diverge in opinion, or spread asunder in verbal definitions or polemic apprehensions on secondary and subordinate topics, they will all be found, ever reunited in sentiment, respecting the fundamental essentials, and vital substance of religion, and its everlasting utility—not merely to man individually considered, but to the greatest empire. Re-



ligion is the fealty of the human mind ; it is a lively acknowledgement of gratitude and submission, as much due by the greatest empire, as by the humblest individual. Before its tribunal, both are equally feeble. To be forgetful of it, in either, argues a stolid and pitiable ingratitude to the great Giver of all good ; and draws its punishment along with it. The individual loses the best solace, and the most animating principle of his existence. The greatest empire thus forgetful of its weakness, and absorbed in its pride and self-sufficiency, enervates the strongest arm of its strength, and rashly renounces, or foregoes the influence, which it might otherwise possess over the minds of its citizens. But the establishment of religion seems imperative on the greatest empire, as much as an habitual religious impression is valuable to an individual, or even more so. An individual may forget, or forsake his duty for a season. The first blow of misfortune awakens conscience, and forcibly recalls a man to his duty. Empires have no such monitors. If their principles be erroneous, they continue to flounder on in sickly and feeble existence—in turbulence and faction ; cradles for all the bad passions which afflict human nature. The empire which embraces and adheres to right principles is never sickly—never feeble. It flourishes green in age, equally as in youth : branches may be pruned off, or decay—*truncus viret, semperque virebit.*

Time, which alters all things earthly, may have rendered a change necessary, not in the spirit and substance of Christianity, but in the mode of its adaptation to the wants of man in an altered state of society. It would therefore perhaps be found, on a revision of the thirty-nine articles, by the proper authority, in our time, now that enquiry and discussion have begot a better temperament, and spread a brighter, a steadier, and a holier light, over the Christian world, that they can advantageously be rendered more comprehensive, without detriment to their substance or their science. To their substance, because they are gospel-truths—to their science, because they are instituted for them only who are properly ordained, as having a scientific knowledge of the principles of their profession.

It was Mr. Gordon's opinion, that the government of this empire has not been sufficiently attentive to the vast national and individual utility of spreading school-establishments in connection with the great university and collegiate establishments, through every district of its territory, in descending gradations, adapted to the solid instruction and suitable training of the humblest of the people in religious and moral habits. He was fully aware, that the human understanding does not endure a vacuity, and that it is prone to run into incalculable and obstinate



errors on these vital subjects, when left to the feeble, unconnected efforts of its own unassisted powers:—that even should a man, by a lucky chance, happily fall into a right course of thinking on these subjects, he still finds himself at sea, unsupported and unconnected, dependent on his native individual energies alone, to assist him against the winds and billows, which continually assail him in the voyage of life. He conceived it therefore the bounden duty of the supreme authorities of the state, which in respect to the public, are in this regard, *in loco parentis*, to provide such establishments, and to make such arrangements universally, that the human mind, even in the humblest situations and rank of life, shall receive a right nourishment and due direction, which may influence its conduct during the whole course of life. He did not think, that the youth of the country should be left to the chance direction and training of unconnected, and perhaps, blind guides—aye, and may be, perverse and mischievous guides; or to the casual influence of cheap tracts,\* which, for the most part, they cannot even

\* It must not be understood, from the above, that Mr. Gordon was averse from the dissemination of cheap, judiciously written, tracts.—He, in fact, co-operated in that scheme. He however did not deem it, even in conjunction with the Bell, or Lancaster Schools, a full and sufficient plan of national education.

read, and which their habits have never been formed to relish, or even to darkly understand. He did not deem it a system of national education to have youth instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, only. He did not think that thus to impart an arm of some strength to human beings, which they may use indifferently for the public detriment or the public service, without the guidance of religion, morality, or established authority, whether on the cheap, compendious, and fashionable plan of Doctor Bell, or Mr. Lancaster, was a full and satisfactory plan of national education. He knew that reading, writing, and cyphering, (as Cuddy Headrigg calls them) are things quite compatible with the most absurd, wild, stupid, and mischievous opinions respecting the fundamental ordonnances and duties, which should regulate and govern the constitution of society. That they, in fact, have neither a necessary nor a natural tendency to give any salutary direction to the human understanding. They do not train up the child in the way he should go. They implant no habit of order, religion, or morality. They give a boy some ease and firmness in his steps; but they do not instruct him in the least as to the course most necessary for himself and the public, that he should pursue in life.— They subject him in a very slight degree to mental discipline, or intellectual habits, and they do not con-



nect his ideas with any authority. They teach him no duty either to God, or man—They may as readily become instruments of insubordination, as of obedience. Not so with a right education, inculcated by proper heads, and connected with the public authorities. Mr. Gordon was indeed well aware, for he knew that human legislation can work only by moral causes, that after all, the best arranged system of national education, spreading the vigilance of its wisdom, by the most suitable and sufficient instructors, throughout every district of the country, can effect, some tares will still be found to spring up in the moral, as well as in the natural world. But still the proverb holds strongly and significantly, that he who sows not good seed, sows and will reap tares. Provident legislators take care wisely and prospectively to cultivate the soil, and to sow good seed. Provident legislators well know that youth is the season, in which to give a right direction to the human mind—that it can then, and then only, be easily and cheaply moulded to the shape which it ought to assume and retain through life. The impressions then made on it, will last long,

*Quæ semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem,  
Testa diu.*

Should we not therefore conclude, that the errors of opinion are, for the most part, involuntary, and are rather to be pitied than despised ; rather to be treated with emollient than caustic remedies : and are much more easily prevented by the universal spread of a right education, than to be rooted out by the repulsive violence of harsh, restrictive, and ungrateful laws ? For it must be allowed, that most of them, and of the conduct flowing from them, are the effects of ill-training and consequent ignorance, evidences much more of the weakness of the human understanding, when left to its own unassisted guidance, than of the malevolence of the human heart : attributable much more to the defects of man's education, than even to the perverseness of his understanding. If the establishments for public instruction, were as sedulously organized, as eagerly supported, as widely spread, and as deeply fixed, as those of the military, British society would, in another generation, wear a more contented, placid, and peaceable aspect. If half the pains and money were expended to train up youth, to model them to habits of public and private virtue, that are consumed to punish vices, and repress errors, society would make more rapid advances, in civility, than it does. Youth would be then trained in useful, uniform, and social principles, and not left, as they are now, to preceptors, unconnected in views, in discipline, and authority, with



the great national establishments and public functionaries of their country. Self-restraint, an inbred regard for order, and a rational, manly submission to authority, would be generally worked into the people's habits. The best interests of society would spring from the culture, and grow to the greatest public and private happiness. The weeds of pernicious opinion, which darken life, and lessen its comforts, would be so effectually thinned by such a process, as no longer to endanger the harvest.

It is surely an undeniable principle, howsoever it may have been hitherto practically overlooked, or neglected, that the public instruction is one of the first duties of the supreme authority of the state. If it were not so, by what right can the publication of opinions detrimental to the public happiness, and the good of society be enquired into and punished? It is much easier, as well as more consonant with goodness, to implant right propensities in youth, than to eracinate wrong ones in advanced age. If the public authorities neglect the duty of public instruction, the people are left to themselves, to provide for the deficiency as well as they can. If then the people may have been instructed in opinions, and reared up with tendencies detrimental to the public interest and so-

cial order, those opinions and tendencies must be rooted out or counteracted by force—by the force of arms: a dreadful remedy for an evil, which a due vigilance and faithful fulfilment of their duty on the part of the supreme authorities of the country, would most effectually have prevented. Had those authorities been as serious and vigilant in establishing the means of national cultivation; in providing suitable institutions and instructors, for training, modeling, and directing the understandings of the youth of society, as they are, in repressing their full grown, obstinate, noxious, and dangerous propensities, the circle of their own duties would long since have been much narrowed, their course smoothened, their prospects cheered and extended on all sides: gleams of joy and gladness, instead of sullenness, discontent, and defiance would have opened around them. And surely it is, as much the interest, as it is the duty, of the supreme authorities of the state, that the youth of the country should receive a salutary and due direction. It belongs to such a timely wisdom, to such a provident care, as that which we have been contemplating, to relieve them from the painful necessity of those, or at least most of those inflictions, which cast an odium on authority. And no country under the sun, has so strong a claim as Britain, for such beneficent attention of its legislators. No other country is so much ex-



posed to sudden and violent inroads on its religion, morals, literature, and subordination, from the continual flux and reflux of foreigners, from the indiscriminate intercourse of its citizens, and their commixture with all the nations of the world. From the dissoluteness and mutual corruption of manufactories. Still further, and in a predominating degree, and in a more dangerous quarter, from the rapid growth of wealth, in the commercial classes, out of all proportion with the progress of a real, liberal cultivation, and the inherent checks which it never fails to furnish, against the self-plumed presumption of the human mind. If ever the British constitution perish, the ruin will be brought on, not by the corruption of the legislature, (for no earthly power can corrupt it) or from the corruption of any of its branches, king, lords, or commons, or by the sword of its army; but by the spread of wealth among its people, in a degree out of all proportion with a well connected, well disciplined, national education—from a want of an habitual, established national training of all orders of citizens, implanting in them, in early youth, a sense of their social duties, with more solicitude, and in a greater degree, than of any acuteness in letters and science, which are in no danger of not being sufficiently cultivated, tending as they do directly to the illustration of the individual. But the mind of the country should be

nationalized, as well as its wealth and power. The rays of its intellect should be trained to converge and contribute to the general glory and harmony. They have a natural tendency to scatter and spread wide, in a manner dangerous to public union, authority, and strength. To accomplish an end apparently so desirable, it needs only to extend and diffuse offshoots in all directions from, and still in connection with, the great parent seminaries already in existence. It only requires to revise and enlarge the plan of national education. To do that on a well-arranged system of union and subordination, which individuals, and societies of individuals, do now, on the glimmering lights of tyros in knowledge. Let a board of education, consisting of the heads of the church, and of the universities, be invested by the legislature with power and means to bring a real, moral, religious education home to the lowest, as well as the highest ranks of society, and the thing will be done. Let the principle be once agreed on—new lights will every day spring up to purify and improve it. Half a generation will not have passed off, when the clamours of faction and discontent will have died away. The poor man's cottage, when its inmates shall have been thus early trained in the way they should go, will then no longer envy the palace of the great. The peasant



will have been taught, that the great ones of the earth are as useful to him, in the scheme of society, as he is to them; and all will be embraced “in one wide system of benevolence.”—Finally, in justice to Mr. Gordon’s memory, it is right to explain, in a few words, his political opinions. It is the more so, because they have been utterly mistaken and misrepresented. It was indeed his misfortune, or his happiness, to sometimes entertain different sentiments from the decisions of authority; but he was not prone to infer, that the authority which he dissented from was less pure or less incorrupt than himself—“*hanc veniam damus petimus que vicissim.*”—He, like the great imperturbable champion of political freedom, and his country’s honour, the illustrious Charles Fox, had studied the history of man and nations, and was of that order of thinking beings, who see events in their causes, and reading, as it were, the future in the past, would prevent those evils which the wisdom of others teaches, at best, only to remedy; and which, perhaps, would not have been remedied, were it not for the providential interference of a Russian campaign, and the drunken ambition of a despot.

He understood, as well as Mr. Burke, that the wisest and honestest politicians, must occasionally

“vary their means, to attain the unity of their end.” This great maxim of social prudence—this sound principle of civil wisdom, was not adopted by him to furnish a contingent excuse, or to throw a veil over his own backslidings. He deemed it a maxim of most especial force, and recurrent application, in such a government as that of Britain, compounded as it is, of all the orders of society, and partaking of all its interests. In such a government, he was well aware, that the most clear and comprehensive minds will often feel real difficulties of opinion, in deciding on the modification, adjustment, and adoption of very many measures. He could not, however, conceive how a man, at once wise and honest, practised in all the ways of mankind, and long conversant in all the intricacies of public life, should designate “kings, as lovers of low company,” and yet regard and throw the mantle of his eloquence around them, as if beings almost superhuman, and of authority indefeasible. Mr. Gordon did indeed deem this a kind of sailing *north by south*, not to be acquired by the ablest navigator, taught in any honest school of political traversing. He could not, like Mr. Burke, perceive in what, the right of the American people to revolt and independence from the comparatively mild and paternal government of Britain, was more sacred and



excusable than that of the French people, from a grinding and humiliating despotism. He did not confound in his mind, howsoever others might in theirs, the right to an amended and reformed government, with the bloody and disgusting atrocities displayed by Frenchmen: atrocities which, although from their extent and modes of perpetration, they cast an indelible stain on the French character, can never sink the value of national independence and individual freedom; of law, or liberty, in the mind of any reasonable being in any country. Nay, these very atrocities are calculated to enhance the sacred and eternal value of regulated freedom; because, in a national sense, such atrocities are the genuine offspring engendered by despotic, unbalanced power, the frightful parent of so numerous ills to mankind.

Mr. Gordon's admiration of the British constitution, was for the aggregate and collective body, and for the manly, rational, and salutary spirit of openness which characterises its operations, and tempers its proceedings. His eyes were not raised in adoration of the throne, as a separate, independent power.—There was no sycophancy in his respect: the due, hereditary authority of the crown, limited and legalized, was, in his opinion, as much a blessing to the people as to the sovereign. Thus circumstanced,

thus surrounded by constitutional checks and responsible ministers, he is exempted from the capricious passions generated by an uncontrollable authority, or prerogative absolute; and all the dangerous and pernicious consequences resulting from them. Irresponsible in his own person, and placed at ease, above the reach and fog of all domestic factions, and of all temptations from foreign influence or corruption, the sovereign "has leisure to be good." Thus, not merely his inclinations, but his habits, will be liberalized; encompassed as he is, by all the motives which human institutions can provide, to engage benevolence, and to ensure the public utility. Nor were Mr. Gordon's affections, or his reason, prostrated to the aristocracy, whose just weight, and liberal, high-bred habits, *a cunabulis*, he always advocated, in connection with the other parts of the constitution. In his admiration of an hereditary nobility, connected in constitutional power, and identified, in social interest, with all the other parts of society, he saw not only a higher polish, but a greater strength given to the barriers of law and liberty. He considered them not only as "Corinthian capitals," but as pillars too, in the edifice of society—monolithic shafts, contributing at once to its beauty and duration. Still farther was he from resigning his reason, or his will, to the capricious, unbalanced, and for the most part, blood-stained



tyranny of the democracy—a power dangerous to itself, even more than to its opponents—an unleavened mass of intellectual matter, a *vis concilii expers*, executing its own decrees this day, with a blind and fatal promptitude, and to-morrow bowed in stupid idolatry before some Baal of its own creation—some military tyrant—some Buonaparte, or some Cromwell—

“The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day.”

He knew, (for he had studied history,) that any of these powers separately considered, affords no protection, or guarantee for human happiness; but that the judicious admixture of all, as happily and fortunately blended in the British constitution, forming the mingled mass of all ranks of the *primores populi*, the only legitimate law-givers of every country, bids fair to be co-equal with the duration of the human race in this empire, and will most probably influence, by the force of its example, the destinies of other nations.

Mr. Gordon lived to see almost all the hopes, which a patriotic philosopher of a sanguine complexion, can form for his country, realized and placed in a train of illimitable improvement by the truly constitution-

al principles and conduct of the regency. He lived to see wisdom and vigour combined with every species of public beneficence, in the councils of his country. He saw the most perilous and extended war, in which this empire was ever engaged, brought to a most glorious and most advantageous termination. He saw the very name of a Briton a title of respect, and a passport through the world. He lived to see the nations, which were thrown down and shattered by the violence of foreign, military tyranny, reconstructed, by British influence and British wisdom; and restored to their balance among each other, with improved arrangement and steadier securities; and their equipoise thus rendered less liable to any chance of future disturbance. He lived to see the vessel of the state conducted with the most rare skill, in the sudden and violent reflux consequent upon the transit from a most extended warfare of so long duration, to a profound and universal peace. He indeed deemed this civil glory equal, if not superior to any glory that can be gained by the greatest exploits of war.— In the exploits of war too, he saw the conduct of his country, and the fame of her heroes, eclipse, in every quarter of the globe, the glories of all other nations. Supereminent above all, he admired the deliverer of the civilized world, his country-man, the immortal Wellington.



As to the charges of corruption made against parliament, he considered them as vague and unfounded charges, mere expressions of jealousy, presumption, or disappointment. He was fully satisfied, that the legislature, in all its branches, is free from every taint of corruption, or tendency to foreign influence. As to domestic influence, he knew not how any government can be conducted without it. He saw it a living and predominating principle among all ranks and descriptions of men in society. All men of all parties assist, and confer favours on their friends, rather than on those, who, though perhaps more meritorious, are not so related to them. They who are loudest in their complaints against it, are neither last, nor least in their practice of this great political offence. The anarchic, drunken turbulence and swinish gluttony of annual elections, or the phrenetic, bloody tyranny of universal suffrage did not appear to his understanding a cure for this evil, real, or apprehended. Far from considering the boroughs of Britain the cause of its evils, he regarded them, when contemplated as a proportional part in the actual, practical system, (for, as to theories, paper-constitutions forged on the anvil of metaphysical heads, he utterly despised them) of parliamentary representation, as a public benefit and providential blessing. He regarded them as the doors—almost the only doors through which heaven-

born talents, not accompanied with hereditary fortune, can enter into the sanctuary and management of public affairs. By the intervention of boroughs, he thought that the solid, lumpish, and unleavened matter of the great landed aristocracy, was happily fermented. He saw, that through this door, the greatest statesmen, Britain or any other country has ever exhibited, have passed—the Walpoles, the Pits, Fox, Grattan, &c. He saw that the substantial interests of all ranks, orders, and degrees of men in society, were thus most effectually protected and advanced. He judged of the scheme, by the practical benefits which it produces on one hand, and the evils which it wards off on the other. By the proud elevation to which it has raised this empire in peace and war, at home and abroad. All experience, all the evidences of history, all the impressions of fact, real ways beyond the fallacious promise of splendid hypothesis, or audacious conjecture, taught him, that the representative of an obscure borough is as vigilant and beneficial a legislator, as incorrupt, and understands the interests of the empire, in all its relations, domestic and foreign, as he who is returned by the most extensive county. Let it be asked, by what conceivable plan can a body of men, more deeply interested in the public prosperity, be collected, than the aggregate body of the present house of Commons, in the imperial par-



liament. If it be evident, as it would appear to be, to any calm considerate mind, that it is utterly impracticable, by any imaginable process, to bring together a body of men more deeply interested in, and more profoundly intelligent, as to the means of promoting the public happiness; it is then merely puerile and pedantic, to dwell in long-winded, or acrimonious verbiage, on the anomalous, irregular system of election, by which the house of Commons is at present formed. The science of legislation is made up of practical sound sense, and good feeling, and holds on a clearer and a steadier course, than the palpable obscure of merely theoretic wisdom, which never fully applies to, or takes a luminous view of all the circumstances of human affairs; and knows not how to make due allowance for the varied friction, and the up-and-down-hill movements of society.

While the the great bulk of the representatives in the imperial parliament may continue, as they are, fully and to all practical purposes, identified in interest with the soil of their country, and with the blood and mass of its population, subject in their own persons and estates, to the laws of their own enacting, and exercising their functions, *apertis foribus*, in the face of the public, by whom their individual character and conduct may be scrutinized, there is

not only no danger, but not even a possibility of any general corruption running through them. No ministry, howsoever profligate, can buy off a majority in the British senate, to betray what they conceive to be the interest of the empire. The grounds of their attachment to their country, are every way in an immeasurable degree stronger than any ministry, even if so disposed, (which is altogether a violent and gratuitous assumption,) can, with the utmost efforts of his profligacy, even if he had ten times the amount which he possesses of secret and public influence, oppose against them. Ministers are, doubtlessly, obnoxious like other men, to the errors of opinion; but their obliquity gives no assurance of the rectitude of their opponents. There is no certainty, that the film which obscures the one, may not also bedim the other. They are in unison and analogy with the progress of society—not the mushroom contrivance of system-making legislators.

In Mr. Gordon's opinion the reformation most wanted in the practice of the constitution, and law, lay in the constituency and not in the representative body. It seemed to him desirable to bring back the law to its original spirit and intention, respecting the qualification for freeholders. Time and circumstances have so altered the effective value of money,



that perhaps thirty pounds a year now, is not more than equal to what two pounds, the qualification of an elector originally was. Such a reformation would not at all disturb the right, or self-protecting influence of property, a thing ever to be held sacred by the laws. But it would gradually bring back the tenantry to that state and condition, which they should always enjoy, of a well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed body of men. Such a reformation would not in the least alter the relative weight and consequence of landed property; and it would effectually check the growth and spread of a poor, ragged, broken-hearted peasantry, now known even by the law, as freeholders. They, who favour the present practice, do not come armed with a very forcible argument against universal suffrage, and mob-government.—They rather fortify themselves in the blind hope of rising on the shoulders of a profligate, because poor and beggarly populace, than in the steady and useful attachments of property, on which, the prosperity of human society, is founded. It is however urged, that a man not possessing political power, elective franchise, has no sufficient security for his life and liberty. Laws to which he has never assented by himself, or his representative, may deprive him of both. It is therefore inferred, that every man (and it may, by the same reasoning, be inferred, that every man,

woman and child) has a natural, inherent right to an equal share in making the laws, or in appointing the law-makers. This sycophantic and delusive jargon is, as false in fact, as it is, in its consequences, subversive of the best interests of society. It is false, that men are equal by nature, or reason. Nature and reason make the inequality between man and man, even greater than human institutions do.—The bodily strength and intellectual powers of man and man, differ more widely even than the fortunes of citizen and citizen. All men cannot therefore be equally entitled to political power, by natural law. Society cannot be founded on such a presumption so much at variance with nature, and with fact. The right to political power is therefore a modification of human convenience (not an abstract principle levelling all conditions) for the advantage of society; and has, most wisely, been attached to property, as a shield of protection against the blind rapacity of the poor and needy, who are necessarily surrounded by temptations to seize on and disturb property, which the rich and powerful have not to injure life and liberty. On the contrary the natural impulse of the rich and powerful, when established in their rights unassailably, is to protect, by wholesome laws, the life and liberty of the poor and needy, to come to their assistance in all emergencies of sickness, or of



sorrow, of hunger or of dearth. But the natural impulse of the poor and needy, is to disturb and appropriate to themselves, the advantages of the rich and powerful, although any individual's share of the plunder could be small indeed. Property therefore, which is the object and the aim of all human industry, manual and intellectual, requires bulwarks of self-defence, not at all necessary, or useful to men, not possessed of it. Property generally begets habits tranquil and quiescent. It is therefore useful in a scheme of national representation, that a door should be kept open, by which property can associate to itself other qualities, in sufficient abundance to enliven and enlarge its views. That the talents of the land, of whatsoever description, may be thus, for all useful purposes, sufficiently represented, and enchained to the public service, which, if not thus enlisted, they would otherwise disturb and impair. After all, when we consider the imperial house of commons, a miscellaneous mass of all, that is eminent in society, in which also property preponderates; yet we will find, by the evidence of history, and the analogy of human nature, that were it not balanced on the other side by the house of lords; and both of these houses, compressed by the great (it is to be doubted whether now sufficiently great) influence of the crown, it would be obnoxious

to most dangerous oscillations, and would otherwise, notwithstanding the gravity of its materials, soon swing from its centre, split into factions, and perish by the sword of some new military demagogue.

Law, and liberty, property, peace, and life itself, must be protected by arms. All other men, as well as kings, find their last reason in arms. The necessity for arms attaches to society in all its stages, from savage life, up to the highest refinement. As people multiply—as the arts of peace advance—as property accumulates, and life refines, arms become a separate profession. The difficulty then is, to socialize the profession—to infuse, as it were, through the very marrow of the military body, an habitual disposition for submission to the civil authority, with a continual aptitude for war. How to reconcile such discordant elements, is a problem of so great difficulty, that only the institutions of this country have ever effectually solved it. In other countries, whenever the army is extended in a degree commensurate with the wants of war and the national defence, it becomes, on return of peace, terrific to the public liberty. The great military leaders and officers of foreign armies, have no civil interest superior, or equivalent, to that of their military profession.—They are soldiers of fortune, whose souls are absorbed



by war; and they cut and carve for themselves.— Their pay, their plunder, and their glory, are the sole motives and object of their lives, never ending, the soldier of other nations cannot bear to subside into the citizen; and the citizen must endure the soldier. In other countries, the character of both cannot be said to blend. The general policy of other countries seems to say, that the military body should be as distinct in interest as in profession, from the other orders of society. That there should be pride on one side, and abasement on the other.—The institutions of this empire (as if heaven-descended, certainly built up by a heaven-descended wisdom) order matters better; and the soldier and the citizen, from the highest ranks of life to the lowest, commingle in social interest, feeling, and fellowship. The paramount aim of both, equally, is to support and improve the laws, and to assert their sanctity and independence against all foreign force, or domestic factions. The soldier's submission to the laws, in this empire, is as ready and as tame as that of any other man. The chivalrous spirit of a proud and dignified obedience, can, with no propriety, be said to be extinguished, or even to languish. It is woven into the soldier's habits—deeply appreciated by his reason, and suspends his arm before the majesty of the laws.

Mr. Gordon was decidedly of opinion, that this empire is encompassed by a political necessity, to keep a watchful guard against the too great preponderance of any foreign nation—as Spain, Germany, Russia, France, &c. He knew that the nature of all power is accumulative, and requires to be watched by the measures of vigilance and circumspection. That a Semiramis of the North may be as dangerous to national independence and commercial freedom, as a Philip the Second in the South: that the spirit of lawless ambition is the same, whether in a Charlemagne, or a Charles the Fifth—a Lewis the Fourteenth, or a Buonaparte.

He entirely concurred in opinion with those politicians who build the throne on an hereditary foundation, and raise it above all competition in splendour at home, and above all chance of temptation from abroad: but his understanding widely differed from those, who wish to see the throne surrounded by a set of beggarly officers, with stunted and curtailed salaries, scarcely equal to the profits of a thriving shop-keeper. He thought such provisions not only incongruous and inconsistent in their nature, but dangerous in their consequences; inasmuch as the steadier and more independent those props by which the crown is surrounded may be, the stronger the



ties by which they are held to the civil constitution, the less danger there is of their giving way to the pressure of so great a power. He well knew, that those thrones whose princes are served by slaves, or by officers approaching in their salaries to an estate of slavery or meanness, are eventually neither cheaper nor more beneficial than the splendid monarchy, which only freedom knows how to erect, or can support. He had therefore no envy against the large salaries and pre-eminent respectability of public men. He thought, that as society advanced in wealth and splendour, the provision for the public service and its functionaries, should advance, *pari passu*. That thus only can a government become an emanation from, and be a just representative of society, by embodying in the public service a sufficient proportion of all that is great, and illustrious in the country. He could not be persuaded that mean salaries are the best securities for the fidelity of public functionaries; and he knew that those salaries, even more certainly than the incomes of private men, being expended at home, quickly return into the bosom of society, and give a new *impetus* to arts and industry. He did not, however, conclude that the abuses and malversations of office, should be tolerated. In his opinion, those public concerns call for the public attention, and due

scrutiny; and that in this empire they are not now neglected. He only contended, that public officers should be at least placed on a level with the corresponding ranks of society.

Mr. Gordon's opinion, like Mr. Hume's respecting a public, national debt, does not appear to have been formed with his usual caution and circumspect investigation. He did not sufficiently distinguish between such a debt, as affecting a despotical government; and, as affecting a government constituted, as is that of this empire, in which all the various, important interests of society have a practical advalorem representation. Although in a despotical state, a small public debt, tends to stablish the sovereign, till the means to satisfy the stipulated interest fail; yet when accumulated beyond this point, it then immediately becomes the fatal signal for discontent, revolt and revolution—Witness France. On such occasions, under such governments, unsocial and despotical, each order of society stands on its own unconnected, isolated foundation, and asserts its own peculiar and selfish privileges, like an ally in a confederacy, rather than as a component part of one homogenial body. But in a government, such as that of this empire, emanating from and having a practically inherent connection, and identity of interest with all the im-



portant interests of society, there is no such danger. Such a government has a safety-valve adapted to the vast power of the machine. As the principal of the national debt rises—as the elastic gas ascends, the valve gives way—the interest sinks. In this scheme, matters arrange themselves by a self-motion, native and inherent, on the principle of family-concord, and mutual advantage. When capital can be more profitably employed in trade and business, the tax of the national debt is the more easily borne. When capital can be less profitably employed in business, men become desirous to invest it in the public funds, and this competition sinks the rate of interest to the public means of paying it. In despotic governments, a debt is that of the state only, and wears all the harsh features of a private contract. It is a bond in the hands of a Shylock, possessing no softening, mitigable quality. But in a country, whose government is constituted as ours is, it has an entirely different character. Although it cannot be said to be the cause of the nation's prosperity, it is an evidence and an index of national improvement—it is an evidence and an index of the great commercial wealth of the country. Loans cannot be raised at home till wealth has accumulated.—When it becomes so greatly accumulated as it has in this empire, it is fortunate that it can be fixed

and nationalized in the public funds. It is thus prevented from taking wing to foreign shores, and fructifying, perhaps, hostile countries. It thus becomes an additional anchor to ensure the public domestic tranquillity—a fulcrum on which to support the national power in a manner most effectual, against all hostile attacks. It thus imparts a princely spirit to the mercantile interest, and renders merchants, by blending them in the magistracy and government of their country, in the words of scripture, “great men of the earth.”—Nor does the blessing end here—it spreads through, and has a genial influence over the conduct and affairs of private life. When men see that prosperity in trade may lift them and their families to contact with ancient greatness and modern renown, and give them a participation in the government of their country, their feelings become liberalized by their hopes; and we all know the strength and force of hope. A public debt, as it exists in this empire, is therefore a commercial, political, and moral blessing.—Britain, the most improved and prosperous nation under the sun, has the greatest national debt. It is, perhaps, greater in its amount, than the aggregate of all the public debts of all the countries of the world. But are the citizens of any other country, *ceteris paribus*, more at their ease? Is industry better rewarded



in other countries supporting an equal population? Have men generally more chances, or greater probability of becoming independent by an honourable exertion of their talents in professions, or in trades? Are the labouring classes of society better fed, clothed, and housed, in other countries? If not, can the national debt be said to press against the national prosperity? Has it not advanced with the growth of society itself, by mutual and voluntary agreement, and gradual stages? Has it not, and does it not, support and propel every national interest and glory? Has it not been formed from the successive accumulations of provident and fortunate individuals, in all the arts, trades, and professions, which maintain and polish society? Can it in reason, in justice, or in equity, be held less sacred and secure, than any other property? Are the social and voluntary pacts of society to be held less indefeasible, than those which, often commencing in violence and blood, were subsequently, with the greatest propriety and utility public and private, ratified by law, as a constituent component principle of society itself. Surely then the national debt has as strong a claim of indefeasible right and elemental consideration. It is, however, not uncommon to hear it confounded with the causes which produced it. To hear arguments aimed to unsettle the foundations on which it rests, by

mixing it up with the politics of the years that are past. This is an unjust mode of reasoning.—The national debt ably and well supported the national interests. It completely soldered all the breaches made by past blunders, inexperience and folly, and carried the national interests and glory, through bad and good fortune, through all the chances of battle and the conflicts of party, to the most triumphant issue. It protected the public from all dangerous blows foreign or domestic: and whenever it may be accompanied with a system of national education, sufficiently extensive to embrace, to train, and modify the great mass of the national intellect, and to give it a uniform direction, the national interests and glory, will be then so thoroughly rooted, as to endure through a long series of ages and generations.

Without the existence of a national debt, it is evident, that the honour and interests of this empire, could not have been so effectually sustained by taxes raised to provide, within each year, for its own expenses. But by the instrumentality of the national debt, the prosperity of merchants becomes the same as the public prosperity. Both interests are thus identified. Property, which has a natural tendency, to fix itself capriciously, in large masses of accumulation, in the coffers of fortunate individuals is thus re-distrib-



buted, and, in form of the public expenditure, gives an impetus to arts and industry; and renders the public burdens more gradual, less sensible and less oppressive. Let the amount of this debt be whatever it may, the fair question is, whether the national means are more depressed by it, than they must necessarily have been by providing for the national exigencies without it. If it be clear, that to have provided for the national expenses, by annual taxes, to the amount of those expenses, as the public service called for them, would have repressed and paralyzed the national powers of industry and reproduction, much more than to pay a gradual interest for the sum of those expenses, it is evident, that the national debt, on the whole amount, is beneficial, as at least a cure for a greater evil. Now at five per centum, twenty millions can be raised for one million of taxes. The prompt expenditure of twenty millions enables a country to obtain advantages, which it could not obtain by the slow process of raising forty, or even perhaps sixty millions in a series of four or six years. The national debt has thus then put this empire in a proud attitude, to which it could not otherwise have attained. Its honour thus asserted supports its interests, and its interests thus supported, makes the condition of every individual subject, *ceteris paribus*, much less difficult to be borne, Yet it is boldly asserted, that the national debt of this

empire presses against manufacturing arts and industry, and enhances their price beyond what they would otherwise be, in all foreign markets. If it were as easy to prove a proposition, and satisfy the mind, as it is to make an assertion, the logic of all men would be pretty much on a level. Nature, which gives different advantages to different men, deals in the same manner by nations; and doubtlessly several manufactures are better adapted to the genius and climate of other countries than to our own. The existence and intervention of the debt have maintained and kept alive many a manufacture among us, which would have been in ruin without it—or rather the whole fabric of our national manufactures, would have participated in the ruin, which the existence and intervention of the debt, have saved the public fortunes from. Let us not therefore envy the blessings of Providence and the developement of their industry to other nations. Their prosperity will make them better, because richer and abler customers for those articles, with which we can best supply their wants. This is the true principle of trade, a barter of equivalents—real or imaginary. This principle, whether founded on reason, or on instinct; on a well judging taste, or a wild caprice, gives birth to the industry of nations; and propels men to the production of articles, which never would be formed at



home, were it not, to command articles from abroad, which too, would never have had existence, had no such reciprocity existed. In the commercial world, the wealth and prosperity of every individual country, contribute to the wealth and prosperity of all others. Thus, to compare extremes, the poor Indian, who traverses the vast north western wilderness, becomes gradually civilized, by the altogether fantastic and superfluous wants of the beaux and belles of the polite world. The market, which is thus opened to him, for the produce of the chase, gradually teaches him new wants, and supplies them more conformably to his growing tastes, than he had ever been accustomed to. Thus the vanity of one part of our species awakens the dormant powers and excites the industry of the rest. Thus the national debt of this empire, places it, in such a high, strong, and commanding position, that the entire faculties of her people may be developed to the greatest advantage. The whole commercial world is thus involved in the continuance of her prosperity. She is thus rendered the centre, towards which the commercial interests of the world gravitate, and round which they move. Her prosperity is thus founded, not in the loose and shifting sands of man's opinion merely, but in the adhesive soil of his interests also. If man had not a stronger tendency to pursue his interest, than to

embrace the fleeting meteors of opinion. If this instinct does not impart circumspection to his reasoning, and caution to his conclusions, the debt of this empire would be subjected to shocks and variations, much more rude and violent, than it is. If the payers of taxes, were not, in a great degree the payees also, their discontent would manifest itself, in a manner much more formidable, than the clamour of a populace. But the interest of those, who give the tone to public opinion, governs the stops, and ventages, which produce the national concord, and the greatest practicable, public prosperity. It is thus, that the national debt gives, in this empire, steadiness to the Euripus of commerce, the fleetingness of opinion, and the fugaciousness of capital. As it encreases man's wants, as it multiplies his desires—it teaches to provide for their gratification in the greatest abundance, and at the cheapest relative rate. If it enhances the price of articles contributing to the ease and comfort of human life, it enhances in a still greater degree, the general price of the labour necessary to the manufacture and production of those articles; so that, fairly speaking, the comforts and convenience of the labouring classes are encreased by it.

Finally, experience shews that the national debt, (that is to say any fixed amount of debt) has a na-



tural tendency to decrease in weight *de die in diem*—in an adequate proportion to the accumulation of capital, to the extension and perfection of the arts of civilized life, and to the ratio of mercantile profits, always, in all its phases, adjusting itself, to the public convenience, and ministering as by a vernal process, to social advancement and national prosperity. That it liberalizes public and private liberty, and teaches it to look defiance only against the enemies of British institutions. But this defiance, how great soever, is simply defensive, and aims no blow at the prosperity and trenches not on the happiness of others. It is merely a vivid indication of a determination to protect their own. *Honores mutant mores*—is an axiom as true of nations, as of individuals; and doubtlessly wealth and strength and power, success and victory, impart a tone, a carriage and a demeanour widely different from the struggles of poverty, weakness and defeat. Buonaparte, the day after the battle of Waterloo, presented a very different face, from that with which he scowled on the nations of Europe after the battle of Austerlitz.

Some projectors gravely propose to pay off, (or annihilate rather) the national debt, by a great national effort—by a level on the property of the individuals, who compose these nations. It is not however, an

altogether evident, axiomatical truth how the individuals or the nation can be thus relieved. On this project so much property should be brought to market, that it is pretty plain prices would sink in a degree so frightful and fatal, as to mock the calculation of the projector. Neither, if the project were practicable are its advantages more evident. How individuals can be bettered in their fortunes and condition by subtracting from the principal, rather than by an efficiently slighter reduction of their income, in the form of taxes, (which paid by one hand of society are received by the other and to which all prices and incomes are adjusted) is indeed so problematical, as to be, to common understandings of very difficult solution. This calculus seems to savour more of the arithmetic of a school-boy, than of a statesman. It does not consider, that the public stock of wealth, or the national powers of reproduction cannot be thus increased; and that such a scheme can never be realized without the violence and mischief, public and private, of a tumultuary, revolutionary transfer. That it has therefore a manifest tendency to entail upon these countries much of that evil under which France still labours; and is now only recovering from;

“ It is but a part it sees and not the whole.”

It concludes the debt to be an evil—yea, a curse, and then in just ratiocination (wrong only in principle,



sandy only in foundation) it infers, that to rid the nation of it, by any means soever is a blessing.

To pay off the debt, or to annihilate it, if practicable, would not add to the stock of national, or individual wealth. It would not encrease agricultural, manufacturing, or mercantile products. It would not open new markets at home, or abroad beneficial to the empire. Instead of spreading arts, and industry, it would evidently repress, or banish the springs of arts and industry, and reproductive power from these countries. At present there is no deficiency of capital felt for the purposes of trade. The evil is in the want of means and channels in which to employ capital. If capital cannot be employed, or if income cannot be derived from it at home, it will infallibly seek employment and income in foreign lands. Abandoning, therefore, this nostrum, which is too full of promise, and of too rapid and violent operation, to be sanative, or safe, let an amelioration of the public fortunes be sought where they have always been infallibly found—in an adherence to the ordinary modes which Divine Providence has ordained to found and advance all human prosperity—in a greater and more unshackled freedom of trade; or by equitable, that is to say, mutually advantageous, commercial treaties with foreign

nations, (if commercial treaties should be deemed useful, which is questionable,) by rendering the laws, where practicable, more equal, just, and impartial—by systematized, foreign colonization, which may in distant time be as out-posts, and *points d'appui* for the body of the empire—off-sets; from which, in future ages, the well-regulated spirit of British freedom, may be diffused through all climates of the world.—Such seem to be the chief practicable means of encreasing the national wealth and industry—of adding to its prosperity and happiness: except, indeed, we should be inclined to adopt the plan of Dean Swift, which is still more sagacious than that of our more modern projector—viz. to kill one part of the population with which to feed the other, and to tan their hides to make summer-boots for the dandies and exquisites of our time. If a shower of gold could be poured upon the land, as if by volcanic eruption, sufficient to pay off the national debt in an hour, it would not be a jot more beneficial to the nation, than the above laudable project of the witty and patriotic Dean. The money, to be useful, should be used; and as the capital already on hands cannot find channels of employment, the proprietors of this portentous shower of gold, should starve at home, or carry the metal to other countries to make profit of it. The ultimate conclusion would then appear to



be, that national prosperity is of a regular growth, and cannot be forced by a jerk of authority, although, like the oak of the forest, which continues to spread indefinitely through ages, it may be hewn down in a moment.

This sketch now draws to a conclusion. The narrator will, by some, be thought too ardent and enthusiastic in favour of the memory of his friend. Let the reader, however, be assured, that his ardour, or his enthusiasm has never carried him beyond the bounds of strict truth. His zeal may, indeed, be somewhat warmed by his affection, and roused by the unmanly obloquy dealt by low minds against the memory of his friend, to the prejudice of his children. But this puny spite, this froth of faction, foams in vain. The solid adamant of Mr. Gordon's character, his unspotted life, the inflexible integrity of his nature, the pure bullion of his understanding, his solid unassuming learning, bid a firm defiance to all hostility. While he lived, his masculine virtue proud in its consciousness rushed to repel by open retort, those arrows which a cowardly malignity aimed at him, from secret ambush. He scorned all such weapons: his character scorns them still; and he often, from extreme sincerity, laid himself open to wily arts, which he could never practice. Never meditating fraud or wrong to any

man, he was above all fear, and transcending the stoic, he settled in the christian philosopher. He aimed at serving the interests, shaming the vices, and promoting the social concord of his countrymen and fellow-citizens; but he never stooped to flatter them, or to join in any of their factions; and never courted popularity in any shape or form—but please God, his children may see popularity accompany his memory—that popularity, which if on earth, he would value popularity with the good and wise. During his life, he engaged the respect and attention of some of the most exalted and venerable characters to whom he was known. Since his death, it appears in what estimation his memory is held by him, who must for every reason be allowed to be the best and only appropriate judge of it. By the Right Rev. and Hon. Percy Jocelyn, D. D. Lord Bishop of Leighlin and Ferns, who, having had the best opportunities of knowledge, as his diocesan for many years, stamps with authoritative sanction, the true value on his character. His Lordship, with the grace and reanimating manner by which a man of his birth and station, so well knows how to confer an obligation, in promoting Mr. Gordon's only son, the Rev. Richard Bentley Gordon, to a benefice, declares, “that he wishes to shew his respect for the memory of his father, as an author, and a gentleman of high consideration in his diocese.”—That the son will feel and



manifest the like manly gratitude of his father on a similar occasion, there is good reason to hope. He has already given proof, and promise of a steady determination in maintaining the rights of the Church, and promoting its interests, by a perseverance, not to be shaken by difficulties. But this judgment of the Bishop of Ferns, this generous tribute to the memory of a scholar of independent mind, whose praise could never be gained but by goodness, and who never accepted a favour but where he thought goodness resided, reaches far beyond its immediate object. It evinces, in a manner impressive and conclusive, that the spirit of a scholar and a gentleman, should enter into and actuate the clerical character. Indeed, what other security can human institutions devise, to guard an established clergy against the degrading solicitations of sensual appetites on the one hand, and the yet more pernicious illapses of spiritual pride and ignorance on the other? But while the honours and rewards of religion and letters are held connected, as the Bishop of Ferns connects them, the establishment will be its own support against all the efforts of secret foes, or open enemies. It may naturally be expected, (it is indeed a prediction of the Author of our holy religion) from the number of willing dupes spread through society, that cunning hypo-

crites should be found to descend on a prey so easy. The disease, however, is not radical or mortal—it is merely symptomatic of weak intellect, in the first stages of enquiry. It will work its own cure by its progress; or it can be arrested in its advances by the simple and salutary process of extending the establishment, with provisions and regulations adapted to the altered character of society. At all events, while a spirit, such as the Bishop of Ferns fosters and acts on, shall predominate in ecclesiastical concerns, the agents of mischief, whether from malign intention, or sincere stupidity, can never again become formidable in these nations. The world has been awaked; and religion, which was given to man, to brighten life, and to cheer society, is not now, as heretofore, regarded as a cold dogma of the brain, or as a series of words repeated by the lips, without influence on the moral habits of life; but as a full and salient fountain, from which all good conduct flows, indicating the purity of the source by the streams that issue from it. But as the Bishop of Ferns so impressively inculcates, it belongs to learning to keep the fountain clear. No other earthly power is of sufficient force to dissipate the deadly vapours of fanaticism, and the intoxicating fumes of enthusiasm, which have so strong a physical tendency to mix with and pollute its waters.



# PREFACE.

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THE Volume which is here presented to the Public, forms about a Twelfth part of the Memoirs Geographical and Historical of the entire Globe: of which, four parts or volumes, were published, up to 1798;—the remainder is left in manuscript, almost completed, by the author. The Editor has not selected this part for publication, on the ground of its being superior, or more complete in execution, than any of the remaining manuscripts: in fact, it is the only part of the work which is not completely finished. It has been selected, because it appears sufficiently competent, and large enough for a volume; which is as much as can, at this time, be presented to public consideration. From the Royal protection and support, which has been so most graciously bestowed upon this volume, it is hoped that the time is not far distant, when the entire work may appear, in an uniform dress. The Asiatic regions are those on which the author bestowed most pains, and which, from the great natural lines of distinction observable over their

surface and population—the number of large islands and archipelagos, by which the Asiatic continent is encompassed—the deep interest which this empire has in their soil and commerce, and the various views which have been taken of them, from the earliest ages, requires the greatest share of attention and pains in research and comparison. Mr. Gordon, it would seem, is therefore justifiable in treating of them so amply as he has done. Of Africa, not much is known, with the exception of Egypt, and the coasts, which are fully described in these manuscripts, as are also all the known parts of the interior, from a thorough examination and comparison of every authority on the subject.

Of the continent of South America, the information is vague and scanty: but, as much as can be had in substance any where, will be found in these manuscripts. Humboldt and Bompland have cast acute and scientific eyes over many of its regions. Their physical features, and distinguishing characteristics, are described in these manuscripts with a bold accuracy. But what was accurate when they were written, has ceased to be so. Physical and moral convulsions are continually altering the features and character of this quarter of the globe: its political and physical geography will afford new matter for future

writers. It is as yet (July, 1819) not easy, to divine the result of the auspicious ferment glowing throughout many of the districts of this great and beautiful division of the globe. It is indeed to be hoped that the expellers of tyranny, if ultimately successful, will never imitate its conduct in their institutions, or remember its existence longer than it may be necessary to assert their own independence. That they will model their political constitution, and shape their public affairs conformably to the analogies of human nature, and to those principles which, from the evidences of history, are proved best to promote human happiness. That they will never pursue chimerical theories, mere offsprings of the brain, having no foundation in the realities of life, and the pre-existing arrangement of society. That they will for ever keep in mind, the great lessons which the present age of the European world so forcibly teaches, that the dogmas of philosophy are as obstinate and bloody, though of not so universal adoption, as those of religion in its darkest ages. If, indeed, we should not say that the names—the sacred names of religion and philosophy, are only masks, which bad men put on to disguise wickedly ambitious aims, unholy and temporal purposes, and which true religion abhors, and true philosophy strips off.



The last volume of these Memoires may contain—

<i>Russia,</i>	<i>Lower Dalmatian Provinces,</i>
<i>Poland,</i>	<i>Greece,</i>
<i>Hungary,</i>	<i>Grecian Islands,</i>
<i>Dalmatia,</i>	<i>Grecian Archipelago;</i>

Subjects of great curiosity and interest, particularly that of Greece, which will be found to be the production of a liberal and pains-taking scholar.

For the last few years, the question of a north-west passage through Baffin's bay, to the Pacific ocean has been received and agitated. The Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews, two rival journals, of the highest rank, *sed magno intervallo*, in public estimation, divide the suffrages on this occasion—Surely however a question of this nature should not be discussed with acrimony, or sarcasm. Such is not the way to arrive at truth in any question of doubt, or difficulty, much less of one, of scientific and liberal curiosity, in which even still (July 1819) there is some uncertainty and room for doubt. After all that has been said and written on this subject, it may not be unacceptable, or unnecessary to quote the following passage from Mr. Gordon's *Terraquea*, or memoirs geographical and historical, vol. 1, page 9, edition 1790—speaking of

Baffin's bay and the inlets connected with it, he says,  
“ I have here considered this whole great inland sea,  
“ or mediterranean of America, as a gulph; and  
“ must continue so to consider it, until it be found to  
“ have some other communication with the ocean,  
“ beside, that which it is known to have with the  
“ Atlantic. That it has no channel westward to the  
“ Pacific is evident from Cook's last voyage, and  
“ Hearn's journey to the Coppermine river:\* nor can  
“ I find any probability of a passage to the northern  
“ ocean, though Captain Cook seems to have believed  
“ it. (Cook's last voyage, book iv. chap. 11,) merely  
“ because he found people of the Esquimaux race in-  
“ habiting the western, as well as the eastern coast  
“ of North America. But this seems not only far  
“ from a proof, but even from a reasonable presump-  
“ tion of such a passage, as it is well known, that  
“ these people carry their light boats across the land  
“ from one arm of the sea to another, and consequently  
“ might have traversed a great share of continent,  
“ from one lake to another, and from inlet to inlet.  
“ Besides a strong argument lies against the supposi-  
“ tion, as the tides decrease, towards the north in  
“ Baffin's bay, (see Foster's Collection of Northern  
“ discoveries.) So that in all probability Greenland  
“ makes part of the American continent.” This con-

\* He would since have added, and M'Kenzie's Journey.—EDITOR.

clusion drawn from the evidence of facts, and the analogy of nature, may approve his critical accumen, and knowledge of the subjects, who thus, by a period of twenty-nine years, anticipates the result of a research for a supposed north-western passage. His manner too, so like a real philosopher, zealous for the truth, but not puffed up,\* by his zeal, or knowledge, may be edifying to some of the litigants. It appears, that in this respect, his opinion was different from that entertained by the writers in the *Quarterly Review*. He, however approved the eloquent ardour of their investigation, and was fully satisfied, from incontrovertible facts of extensive operation, that of late years, such changes had taken place in the polar regions, as to fully justify the undertaking of the late expedition. The editor too, would also infer from his knowledge of Mr. Gordon's sentiments on this subject, in several conversations within the last year, (1818) that were he now alive, he would heartily concur in opinion, concerning the propriety not only of a renewed expedition to those regions, but of many similar expeditions to various parts of the globe. That not only the surface of the earth and sea should be explored by British enterprize; *sed eundum in viscera terræ*.—He knew, although the principal object expected from such enterprizes should be disappointed, that many

\* See *Edinburgh Review*, No. 59, page 5.—EDITOR.



collateral advantages and acquisitions to human knowledge would arise out of them, so as fully to compensate all trouble and expense attending them. Men and nations, he would say, often waste their resources in illiberal, and even cruel pursuits. How then should it be counted folly or extravagance of the government of a great empire, resting in profound peace, with thousands of its citizens ardent, able and prepared, strong and accomplished in science and letters, to extend its glory, and to maintain its interest in peace, as well as they have in war, to fit out ships for discovery, and to equip bodies of learned and scientific men. If the works of war be what chiefly should engage the consideration and attention of the government of a great empire, let it be recollected, that learning and science have in all ages, been the best preparatives for battle. The British empire stretches the influence of its sceptre over the world; and the genius of it's people, if called into action and properly supported, is well able to maintain its influence in the world. She has mind sufficient in her people to put the world in motion, to give ample employment to the utmost exertions of her industry, if her talents be not suffered to droop and become paralyzed by inaction. In the bosom of peace, let Britons recollect, that the surrounding nations are jealous of her glory, envious of her prosperity, though fond of her influ-

ence—an influence in its nature necessarily genial and protective. Her influence among the nations is, indeed a moral quality widely different from the harsh prerogative of arms. It behoves her therefore to set an example to the nations, of an animated cultivation of the arts of peace. By a public, liberal support of the experimental sciences, chemistry, metalurgy, naval expeditions, and companies of exploratory travellers. On such a plan of public encouragement to the united efforts and rivalry of scientific bodies—bodies, the most learned and scientific in the world—What new Congreves to invent machines—fatal machines of war, to prepare new fields of Leipsic—What new Davieses to advance the bounds of science, to stretch its fostering hand, to protect human life; and in the most hopeless circumstances, to turn even the destructive powers of nature to the aid and comfort of humanity.

Long may the port of Britons, give the tone to mankind. The tone of British example, and the strong persuasion of their reason, much more powerful than arms, are spreading over those regions, heretofore the cradles of freedom and letters, twin children, (though for many ages sunk in the oblivion of slavery) the reviving spirit of liberty and learning. Wherever Britons tread, they leave the vestiges of improvement, and the plains of Marathon, we may

now hope, will again become illustrious by the exploits of heroes, awaked by the sons of Britain, re-echoing in their ears, those lessons, which their ancestors first inculcated to animate, and raise the slumbering mind to its proper height in the scale of being. Let it be the praise, the peculiar praise of Britons however, to have softened the harsh features of Greek and Roman liberty, by all the mild graces of Christianity. Let the spirit of universal benevolence, which Christianity every where inculcates, supercede in all her institutions, and in the whole practice, as well as the spirit of her laws, the narrow selfishness, which for ever prevented the spread and lasting establishment of Grecian freedom; and which, even in its native seats, too quickly caused its downfall.

As the author lived in expectation of being able to enrich this volume, with the result of the late Northern expedition, he has left his survey of the Northern regions of North America, in form not quite complete. The editor however, has not presumed to add to, or alter a word in his manuscript; yet, he trusts, it will be found, that it is incomplete in form only, and not in substance. Indeed the expedition does not appear to have brought any material accession to the knowledge of geographical history. As to the



tribe inhabiting the region extending from  $76^{\circ}$  to  $77^{\circ} 40'$  north latitude, and from  $60^{\circ}$  to  $72^{\circ}$  west longitude; (see Ross's Baffin's bay, 7th chap.) and decorated with the picturesque appellation of Arctic Highlanders, they seem to be merely a variety of the Esquimaux race, as yet unaltered by foreign admixture.

It is competent for any one to combat the propriety of any, or all of the opinions promulgated in the foregoing sketch and preface. It is not equally so, to combat the reality of the representation, that is made of them. No man knew Mr. Gordon so well and so long, as the editor of this volume; and he has to the extent of his power, drawn the picture of his mind, the outline of his intellect, with the same fidelity and plainness of execution, that the limner has the miniature-likeness of his face prefixed to this volume.

*July 27, 1819.*

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# HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL

## MEMOIR, &c.

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### CHAPTER I.

## MEXICO.

*Site—Coast—Contour—Mountains—Lakes—Rivers—  
Seasons—History—Spanish Conquest—Vegetables—Ani-  
mals—Fossils—Antiquities—Commerce—Government—  
Religion—Towns—Extent—Division—Population—Inha-  
bitants—Aboriginals—English Settlement.*

### MEXICO,

### CHAPTER I.

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OR NEW SPAIN, taken in a strictly geographical conception, without regard to those political divisions, which have undergone, and doubtless will undergo, a variety of alterations, constitutes that extensive isthmus by which the two immense peninsulas of Northern and Southern America are connected. Thus, comprehending the small isthmus of Darien, it extends, on the south, to the region of Terra Firma, or New Granada. For its Northern limit we must conceive a line

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drawn from the north-western angle of the Gulph of Mexico to the southern part of the Vermilion sea.

Coast.

Washed on one side by the waves of the Atlantic, on the other by those of the Pacific ocean, throughout the entire length of its territory, Mexico possesses a prodigious extent of maritime coast, but is furnished with very few harbours, and seldom enjoys a safe navigation even to these. An immense body of water, incessantly propelled, by the trade winds from the east, into the Gulf of Mexico, drives great quantities of sand to the Mexican coast, which thus receives, insensibly, perpetual accretions, while these alluvians bar its rivers, and fill those inlets which might otherwise constitute receptacles for shipping. Hence, within the vast Mexican Gulf, the coast affords no harbours, unless unsafe anchoring grounds may improperly be so denominated, from the river Bravo in the north, to the Alvarado in the South. Beyond this, farther southward, the eastern coast presents to the mariner the ports of Truxillo in the peninsula of Yucatan, and of Portobello in the isthmus of Darien; but the navigation near these shores is mostly dangerous from a stormy atmosphere. The western coast is furnished with a few harbours, as Sanblas, Acapulco, and Rialexo. The second is a bason, one of the finest in the world, seemingly formed by the explosion of an earthquake. But along this coast also, though the ocean is generally deep to the very edge of the shore, navigation is rendered unsafe by tempestuous weather, through the greater part of the year, especially in the months of July and August, when terrible hurricanes blow from the south-west:

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## Contour.

The contour of this country is altogether uncommon, perhaps even singular. The immense *Cordillera*, or chain of the Andes, which traverses longitudinally all South America, continues its course, with in general a north-westerly direction, but with a comparatively very small elevation, through the territories of Darien, Veragua, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, into the main region, or broadest part of the vast Mexican isthmus. In the last named province the *Cordillera* begins to ascend toward its former attitude; but, in its further progress, instead of displaying the appearance of a mountainous ridge, it expands into a plain, or concatenation of plains, immensely long and wide, of what is called table-land, of prodigious elevation, which extends far beyond the limits of the Mexican isthmus, into North America. Here, instead of a chain of summits, which in South America forms the crest of the Andes, the very ridge itself of the *Cordillera* constitutes the widely spread and lofty plain, on which the mountains of the country are so situated, whether in groups, or arranged in lines, as to bear no relation whatsoever to the direction of the main ridge, which stretches north-westward with the appearance of a vast level. The spine of this region, which, from the level aspect of the surface, is imperceptible to the eye, can only be traced by its forming a separation between the waters which flow with opposite courses toward the two oceans.

Besides the vast central plain, along which runs the spine of the Mexican isthmus, two lateral plains, in the northern parts, one on the eastern side, the other on the western,



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stretch far toward the north, formed in like manner as the central, by the spreading of two lateral ridges, which branch from the main Cordillera about the northern latitude of twenty-one degrees. The numerous and extensive plains of this extraordinary region, which form such a concatenation as to seem only one immense level, except that they are often separated by chains of hills, are yet very different in altitude above the surface of the ocean. The elevation of the great central flats is from about five thousand six hundred to eight thousand eight hundred feet and upwards, equal to that of many of the great Italian Alps. The platform of the land maintains this height very far toward the north or north west, with such gentle acclivities, where actual unevenness occurs, that carriages may roll, with a perfect ease, in that direction, to the distance of fifteen hundred miles from the city of Mexico, consequently a great way into North America. From the central plain to the two oceans the ground declines, but not in the same manner to both. In travelling from the central plain to the Atlantic, the land is found to preserve, through an extensive space, its great elevation; but when a descent commences, it continues to be rapid through the whole way to the shore. The road to the pacific ascends and descends alternately many times, before its termination in the sands of the coast. The great platform of the Mexican isthmus seems generally to consist of a concatenation of vast plains or vallies, environed by hills, and resembling the beds of desicated lakes. One of these is the famous and beautiful valley of Tenochtitlan, elevated above seven thousand four

hundred feet above the ocean's level, in form a long oval, sixty miles in diameter, environed by a wall of porphyritic and basaltic mountains, and containing the celebrated metropolis of Mexico. Yucatan is a low peninsula, flat, except a chain of low hills, which divides it, running in a south-westerly direction.

The chain of the Andes, in its course through Darien and other provinces to Guatemala, is of a comparatively small, but as yet unmeasured elevation, abounding in volcanoes in an extraordinary manner, especially from the eleventh, or at least the thirteenth degree of latitude northward. In Guatemala, where it reascends to considerable altitude, its crest, jagged with volcanic cones, runs along the western coast, but afterwards advances through the central parts of the country, and at length approaches the Gulph of Mexico, when the Cordillera, expanding into plains of table-land, ceases to exhibit any crest at all. On the immense platform of elevated land in the north, the mountains are so scattered or grouped, as not to form any chain, nor to bear any reference to the Cordillera. Of these numerous mountains the most elevated group, some of whose summits ascend into the region of perpetual snow, stands on the south-eastern side of the valley of Tenochtitlan, which it contributes, on that quarter, to inclose. The altitudes of four of the highest summits of this group, above the ocean's level, have been measured. That of Popocatepetl is found to be seventeen thousand seven hundred and sixteen feet; that of Orizaba, seventeen thousand three hundred and seventy-one; and that of

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Iztaccihuatl, fifteen thousand seven hundred. These mountains are volcanic, and two of them, Popocatepetl and Orizaba, are actually long flaming in the present age. Beside these, three other mountains were burning, in the northern parts of the Mexican isthmus, in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century; Tuxtla in the province of Veracruz, Jorullo in that of Valladolid, and Colima in that of Guadalajara. The Mexican volcanoes are ranged in a line from east to west. The numerous chains of hills, by which the extensive plains of the Tableland are commonly bounded or environed, hardly rise to the height of six hundred feet, or at most eight hundred, above the adjoining flats.\*

Lakes.

Those plains which are thus inclosed by chains of hills appear as if they had been in times far remote, vast lakes or basons of water, which has been exhausted, in a long series of ages, by evaporation, percolation through the porous earth at the bottom of the inclosing mounds, or drains through openings formed by the pressure of the fluid, by earthquakes, or by some other operations of nature. The water has not, however, been every where exhausted. Mexico still abounds in lakes, which appear to be in a state of gradual decrease, and to be the remains of ancient basons prodigiously greater. To specify more than a few of these, which are generally of a similar kind, is unnecessary. The lake of Chapala, in the province of Guadalajara,

\* For the contour and mountains see Humboldt's Essay on New Spain, 8vo. London, 1811. The information may be collected from various parts, particularly, vol. 1, p. 24—79.



seems to be about sixty miles in length, and is accounted to occupy twice as great an area as that of the lake of Constance on the borders of Switzerland. The lake of Pasquaro, in the province of Valladolid, is of much inferior, though considerable size, but is remarkable for its extremely picturesque appearance. Much inferior to many others in Area, but the most famous in history, are the lakes of the valley of Tenochtitlan, in the immediate vicinity of the Mexican metropolis. Of these, at present five in number, that which is much the greatest, named Tescuco, expanding to an area of about eighty square miles, is filled with salt water. They collectively occupy little more than the tenth of the valley, but were far more extensive when first seen by Europeans in the sixteenth century. Their decrease, beside natural causes, is partly ascribed to an artificial drain, a tunnel made through the bottom of the mountains on the eastern side, a work, which, from mismanagement, has cost, in a long course of operations, the sum of thirteen hundred thousand pounds, and the lives of several thousand Indians forced into the employment. Far the greatest of all the lakes of the Mexican isthmus is that of Nicaragua in the south, reported to be a hundred and seventy miles in length, and about half so much broad.

The vast lake of Nicaragua, by artificial canals, and rivers which flow in its vicinity to opposite coasts, might perhaps, if the ground were well examined, afford the best situation, any where in the Mexican isthmus, for the opening of a navigable communication between the two oceans. Projects for the forming of such a navigation have

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been several times conceived, but their practicability has no where, within the limits of Mexico, been as yet demonstrated. The rivers of this region, mostly small and in-navigable, are little favourable for the execution of such plans. In the southern parts, from the narrowness of the land, the streams are small; yet are comparatively very wide at their mouths. In the northern, from the rapid descent of the country toward the shores, they are generally torrents. The only great river which flows through the Mexican soil, but which however belongs much more properly to North America, is the Bravo, called also *Rio del Norte*, which runs nearly through a length of fifteen hundred miles, from its source in the North American regions to its efflux into the Gulf of Mexico. Of the rivers whose courses are confined within the limits of Mexico, the greatest, and doubtless one of the principal for the purpose of commerce, is the Santiago, which falls into the Pacific ocean. Of the rest among the chief are the Tula and Panuco, which discharge their waters by a united stream into the Gulf of Mexico. Among the smaller rivers in a more southerly situation, which are conceived capable of utility for internal traffic, the Guasacualco and Alvarado are particularly noted, whose channels lie to the south-east of the maritime town of Veracruz.

Seasons.

From its tropical situation the temperature of Mexico may naturally be expected to be extremely hot, which is actually the case in all the low parts of the country, as the maritime tracts and the flat peninsula of Yucatan. In such in general, wherever the land is not elevated more than a

thousand feet above the level of the ocean, the mean heat of the air, or the temperature calculated at a medium throughout the year, raises Fahrenheit's thermometer to about or near the seventy-seventh degree. But in the great northern portion of the isthmus, from the contour of this region, the temperature of the vast central plains is rather cold, or at least cool, than hot. Here the medial warmth is commonly from fifty-one to fifty-five degrees: but in the highest plains, as that of Toluca, the thermometer, during great part of the day, never rises higher than the forty-third or forty-sixth degree. Sometimes, but indeed rarely, it has sunk below the freezing point in the valley of Tenochtitlan, and snow has been seen there in the streets of the metropolis: but the elevation of the line of perpetual snow seems hardly less in this latitude than fifteen thousand one hundred feet above the ocean. Between the coolness of the interior plains and the suffocating heat of the coasts, various intermediate degrees of temperature have place. All these variations may be experienced in one day, in descending on the rapid declivity of the eastern side to the shore at Veracruz. The whole ascent of the land, from the ocean to the highest plains, is conceived, in respect of temperature, to be divided into three zones. The hottest zone, which is the lowest of the three, ascends very little above the elevation of three thousand nine hundred feet from the ocean's level. Hence to the height of four thousand nine hundred feet extends the middle or temperate zone, where reigns a soft and perpetual spring, free from all severities of cold and heat, where the temperature is so equable as not to vary more than about nine degrees of the ther-



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mometer throughout the year, and where the medial heat amounts to about sixty-eight or seventy. But, as no great advantage can be expected without some accompaniment of an opposite nature, the elevation of this tract is that to which the clouds ascend above the maritime plains: hence this otherwise charming region, more especially its lower parts, is frequently enveloped in hazes or thick fogs. Concerning the third or highest zone, which comprehends the most elevated flats, to add any thing to that which I have already said seems quite unnecessary.

The heat is found greater on the western than on the eastern coast, and also more uniform throughout the year, except that an extraordinary coolness has been observed to prevail a few hours before sunrise. On the eastern the ardours are greatly allayed by winds from the north-west, which blow frequently from the autumnal to the vernal equinox, with the most violence in March, commonly with the least in September and October. Sometimes, but indeed rarely, tempests from the north are felt here even in May, August, and the intermediate months, in what is accounted the favourable season, or that of the breezes, gentle gales from the south, which mostly prevail, with considerable regularity, from March to September. On the western coast what is called the fine season has place in a different part of the year, from October to May: but even then the tranquillity of the Pacific ocean is here interrupted by impetuous winds from about the north-east. Of the foul season in these tracts the months most dangerous to navigators are July and August, when terrible hurricanes

blow from the south-west. Storms also from the same quarter accompanied with tremendous thunder and rain, render the eastern coasts of Nicaragua and the neighbouring parts inaccessible to shipping almost through the whole of August and September. Thunder storms on these coasts are indeed frequent during the greater part of the year, and in the hottest months are often tremendously violent. In general in the Mexican regions the wet season begins in June, and continues about four months: but in the southern parts, where the land between the oceans is narrow, and the mountains are adapted to the interception of the clouds, the rains are far from being confined within so small a portion of the year; nor are the times of rain and drought the same at once in the plains and mountains. In the broad region of the north, where the high plains of the interior form the ridge of the cordillera, the showers are infrequent in the table-land, whose naked surface attracts not the vapours, and thus is deteriorated by an encreasing deficiency of moisture, while the low maritime tracts are copiously watered from June to September inclusively. The showers commence later on the western coast than on the eastern, but continue longer. In the elevated plains the air is salubrious, but on the coasts it is quite otherwise, especially in the hottest months: yet at least in some of the maritime tracts, as at the British settlement in Yucatan, it is found far less unwholesome than in the West Indian islands.\*

\* Humboldt, vol. 1, p. 65—87; vol. 2, p. 250—252; vol. 4, p. 148—160. Henderson's Account of Honduras, London, 1809, p. 9—11.

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## History.

Previous to an account of the products of the Mexican soil, which vary with the temperature, but of which many new species have been added to the old since the conquest of the country by the Spaniards, a sketch of the history of this vast region may not perhaps improperly have place. Like every other part of the New world, or American hemisphere, the existence of Mexico was totally unknown to the inhabitants of Europe and of all the other regions of the Ancient world, till its discovery by the Spaniards, who first, under Columbus, visited the coast of Darien in the year 1502, that of Yucatan, under Hernandez Cordova, in 1517, and that of Veracruz, and of the territories extending thence northward, in the following year, under Juan de Grijalva. The discoverers, in the two latter expeditions, more especially Grijalva and his associates, who had hitherto beheld no natives of the American hemisphere in a condition of society much raised above the state of nature, were astonished when they found a numerous population well clothed in cotton, considerably civilized, and forming the subjects of a great empire, in which a very regular system of government, both civil and religious, had been fully established. This was the great kingdom of Tenochtitlan or Mexico, of whose foundation and subsequent aggrandizement a history is pretended to be given from Mexican records, penciled in a kind of painted hieroglyphics, by which events and their dates were attempted to be transmitted to posterity. I must own that a history derived from such a source appears to me considerably dubious, notwithstanding all arguments adduced in its favour; yet



not to take some slight notice of it might not be regarded as altogether excusable.\*

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According to the interpretations given to us of these paintings, several tribes or nations, migrating southward from some regions unknown, successively settled in *Anahuac*, by which name is understood to be signified all the land of the Mexican isthmus between the fourteenth and twenty-first degrees of northern latitude. The first were the Toultecs, who arrived about the year 648 of the christian era, a people somewhat advanced in civilization, who cultivated maize and cotton, built cities, formed public roads, erected great pyramids, the remains of which are still admired, used hieroglyphic paintings, and measured their time by a solar year less imperfect than that of the Greeks or Romans. The Chichimecs made their appearance in 1170, the Nahuatltecs in 1178, the Acolhuas and the Aztecs in 1196. The last, who have since been called Mexicans, by the people of Europe, are said to have long remained in a state of comparative weakness, to have founded the city of Tenochtitlan, in the valley of that name, in the year 1325, and to have at length gained an ascendancy, and finally, a dominion over the neighbouring tribes. From *Mexitli*, the appellation of their god of war, to whom their chief temple was dedicated, their Metropolis and whole empire were called Mexico by the Spaniards. Their government, whatever may have been its original form, became ultimately a monarchy, where nine kings are re-

\* See Clavigero's History of Mexico.

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corded as reigning in succession, of whom the ninth, Montezuma the Second, was on the throne when Europeans first visited this country.

Indeed, from existing circumstances, various races of men appear to have successively taken their abode in the great Mexican isthmus. Above twenty languages, as different from one another as any two languages of Europe, are spoken in this country. Of not less than fourteen of these have grammars and dictionaries been written. But the signal predominance of the Aztec tongue, which is spoken from the lake of Nicaragua through an extent of eleven or twelve hundred miles northward, seems a strong argument in favour of a far more early origin, or far longer duration, of the Aztec empire than is assigned to it by its pretended history. The account, however, given in that history, that this and other tribes of invaders had come from countries of a northwesterly situation, is highly probable, since we find that these had fixed their habitations in the elevated plains, where a cool temperature prevails, similar to that of more northern regions, in preference to the low maritime tracts, where the soil is more fertile, but the heat much greater. From what countries they came we have no ground to determine. The general conjecture is, that they were originally emigrants from the northern parts of Asia. As their posterity, when first known to Europe, were unacquainted with any other grain than maize, and were quite ignorant of the use of milk and beasts of burden, they could not have migrated from any country into which the agriculture, or even pasturage, of Asiatic people had been introduced.

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Beside the great kingdom of Mexico, thus denominated from its metropolis, several independent tribes and states were found by the Spanish discoverers subsisting in this vast isthmus. In the north were the savage clans of hunters, called Otomites and Cicimecs. Among states composed of people comparatively civilized, seated more toward the south, and bordering the Aztec empire on the eastern and western sides, were the kingdom of Mechoacan and the republic of Tlascala. The territory of the latter was only sixty miles distant from the Mexican capital. The chiefs of Yucatan, the savage tribes of Honduras and of the more narrow tracts in the south, were exempt from the dominion of the Aztec monarchs. This dominion appears to have been confined, at the time of the Spanish discovery, within a space of six hundred miles in length and about one hundred and forty broad, containing perhaps an area nearly equal to that of the island of Great Britain. What may have been its population can only be conjectured. This doubtless was more dense about the seat of government, particularly the valley of Tenotichlan, than at present, but may have elsewhere been more thin. The monarch of this realm appears to have been absolute, but the nobility under him to have been visited with the same pernicious powers of the feudal description as the nobles of the ill-governed kingdoms of Europe, by which the lower orders were miserably oppressed. The political system had been carried to such a pitch of improvement, as in one institution to surpass the best regulated at that time of European states, the institution of couriers, stationed at proper intervals, to convey intelligence with rapidity, to and from the court, to all parts of the empire.



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The people of this kingdom, and of some of the adjoining states, had made considerable advances in civilization. As they were destitute of beasts of burden, their agriculture indeed could not be so extensive as where such are in use; but where no deduction is made from the products of the soil for the food of cattle, a greater number of the human species may be maintained in a given space. Where the cities are large and numerous, and the right of private property, the distinction of ranks, and the division of trades or professions, were fully established, much progress in their state of society must be admitted. As they were unacquainted with the use of iron for the fabrication of sharp instruments, their attainments in the mechanic arts were much slower than they might have otherwise been; yet they had found the mode of hardening copper, by an admixture of tin, to such a degree as thence to form axes and other instruments almost as sharp as those of steel, like the brazen weapons of the ancient Greeks in the time of the Trojan war. "Tin being a metal very little spread over the globe, it is rather surprising that it should have been used in both continents in the hardening of copper."\* They also made knives and other edge tools, of the volcanic substance called obsidian, which was a principal object of their mining industry.

In the fine arts, such as painting, the advancement of the Mexicans, though much admired by the Spaniards of the sixteenth century, fell greatly short of that of the European artists; nor, in literature, had their attainments

reached so far as the invention of an alphabet, though toward it they had made some progress, in painted representations, hieroglyphics, and numeral figures. They had by some means acquired such an acquaintance with astronomy, as, by intercalations and cycles, to calculate the year to a degree more nearly approaching to exactness than the ancient nations of the old continent. Their ordinary year contained three hundred and sixty-five days, of which five were intercalary, the rest distributed into eighteen equal months. They had a cycle of thirteen years, a period of fifty-two, and an age of a hundred and four. They had not improved so far in commercial transactions as to convert the precious metals into money ; but had used, as a medium of exchange, or as the representative signs of the value of things, gold dust contained in transparent quills of aquatic birds, small pieces of copper of a certain shape, thin bits of tin, small bales of cotton cloth, and the almonds of the cocoa fruit or chocolate nut. The last are in use even at this day where very small change is required. The gloomy complexion of the paganism of the Mexicans, who sacrificed human victims to monstrous idols, is not more an argument against the civilization of this people, than against that of the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, the great commercial nations of antiquity : “ for nations, long after their ideas begin to enlarge, and their manners to refine, adhere to systems of superstition, founded on the rude conceptions of early ages.”\* A dismal superstition, however, which required the shedding of human blood on the altars of idola-

\* Robertson's History of America.

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try, seems to have been carried among the Mexicans to an extreme no where exceeded.

Spanish  
Conquest.

If, on the discovery of this country by the Spaniards, a commercial intercourse had been established on equal terms of reciprocal benefit, the Mexicans, by the introduction of the European arts and literature, might have rapidly advanced in civilization, and become, in course of time, a great and wealthy people : but the sole object of the Spanish court, in sending ships to America, was conquest ; and that of the adventurers was the acquisition of riches by the speediest means possible, how nefarious soever. That some formality should be used in the seizure of discovered countries, instructions in writing were given to the adventurers, in which they were authorised to require the natives to submit themselves as subjects to the king of Spain, in consequence of a donation of their persons and territories to that monarch by the Pope, and to embrace the Roman Catholic system of christianity, instead of the heathenish rites which they had practised before. In case of noncompliance, which yet might naturally be expected, where the requisitions must appear incomprehensible to the people to whom they were addressed, the adventurers were commissioned to waste the land by sword and fire, and to reduce to slavery the remnant of the inhabitants. For the conquest of Mexico, Valasques, governor of Cuba, committed an armament to the conduct of Fernando Cortes, a man of most audacious ambition, intrepid courage, and powerful talents ; but so destitute of all principles of honesty,



honour, and humanity, as to deserve truly the title of a consummate villain.

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Having by intrigues drawn his men to consent, Cortes assumed an independent command, disclaiming the jurisdiction of Valasquez, who had expended much of his private fortune on the equipment of the expedition. With a band of six hundred soldiers and seamen, he landed at a place called Sanjuan de Ullua by the Spaniards, in the beginning of April, in the year 1519, at the distance of about a hundred and eighty miles from the Mexican metropolis. His artillery consisted of ten field pieces, and his cavalry of eleven horsemen. The astonishment of the natives was extreme at the display of European arms and tactics, made designedly in their presence, but chiefly at the explosion of the cannons, and the rapid course of the horses, animals of whose existence they had been so ignorant, that they regarded the horse and the rider as composing one creature. Cortes professed the most friendly intentions, declaring himself to be the ambassador of the great emperor of the east, charged with despatches of a nature highly beneficial to the Mexican king, and of such importance, that he could not communicate them to any other person than the monarch himself, to the presence of whom he demanded admittance. Montezuma the Second, the then reigning sovereign, having attempted in vain to purchase the departure of these formidable strangers by magnificent presents, which tended only to inflame their desire of seizing the plunder of a country containing so much riches, transmitted at length peremptory orders that they

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should retire immediately out of his dominions. As Cortes positively refused to reembark, and insisted on admission to the royal presence, matters came at once to such a crisis as required a perfectly decided conduct in the Mexican monarch. He ought to have assembled a numerous army, which might either have overwhelmed this handful of invaders, or at least have starved them into a departure by precluding all supplies.

Whether it arose from a defect in his character, which indeed appears to me to be the case, or from causes not satisfactorily explained, the indecision of Montezuma, who only interdicted his subjects from intercourse with the strangers, was fatal to himself and his kingdom. By being permitted to remain unblockaded on the coast, Cortes found means to discover dissatisfaction in certain members of the empire toward its head, and to form alliances with these against their native sovereign. Reinforced by the troops of these allies, and justly presuming, from the particular instances which had already occurred, on extensive disaffection in other provinces, Cortes commenced his march from the coast into the interior in the August of the same year. He requested permission to pass through the territories of the Tlascalcan republic to the city of Mexico; but this was refused by the council of state, as his designs were suspected, since he had professed himself a friendly ambassador to Montezuma, to whom they were enemies inveterately implacable. After some desperate conflicts, in which the Tlascalcans, from the vast inferiority of their arms, and from absurd practices the result of superstition, were repulsed with

great slaughter, the chiefs of the commonwealth agreed to a treaty of peace and alliance. A very debilitating circumstance in their military system was their regarding the carrying away of the dead and wounded of their party as a point of honour, in like manner as the Greek in early ages, as described by Homer. "Attention to this pious office occupied them even during the heat of combat, broke their union, and diminished the force of the impression which they might have made by a joint effort." Also, from some erroneous idea, instead of taking every possible advantage in their attacks, they sent previous notice to the Spaniards of their intended hostilities ; and, instead of endeavouring to starve their invaders by the prevention of supplies, they even took much pains to furnish them with food.

With a reinforcement of six thousand Tlascalans, Cortes proceeded on his march, in which, from the fatal irresolution of the infatuated Montezuma, he met with no impediment. He was even accommodated with quarters, by command of that monarch, at the city of Cholula, where the Spanish commander, apprehending, or pretending to apprehend, a conspiracy against him, seized the principal men, and made a frightful massacre of the citizens. His object was probably to strike terror, and this he appears to have effected. He thence advanced at the end of October, directly to the Mexican capital, where he was received in a most friendly manner by Montezuma, who assigned him for his residence a palace, with buildings and courts sufficiently spacious to afford commodious lodging to all the Spaniards and their auxiliaries. For the amazing irresolution of the



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Mexican king, and his finally amicable admission of the invaders, accompanied by an army of his most inveterate enemies, into his capital, we can on no other grounds pretend to account than, beside some defect in his personal character, on a superstitious dread of the Spaniards, as being of a superior kind, the object of whose coming was perplexingly mysterious. Cortes, who had availed himself of all advantages derivable from the ignorance and superstition of the devoted prince and people, and who, in confidence of ultimate success, had burned his ships, to preclude, without victory all hopes of return to his soldiers, now put in execution a scheme which, as appears from his own letters, he had meditated from the beginning. Admitted to a friendly audience with Montezuma, he seized his person, and carried him prisoner to the Spanish quarters. The want of magnanimity in this monarch, who ought rather to have submitted at once to the stroke of death than to betray to a foreign foe the dignity of his crown and the safety of his people, favoured highly the views of the insidious European. To appease the citizens, who were rising in a tumult, he declared to them from the battlements of the Spanish quarters, that his removal thither was altogether his own voluntary act for the spending of a short time with his new friend; and, to satisfy Cortes, he even commanded a Mexican general, with several officers, who had made an attack on the revolted clans on the coast, in which some Spaniards were slain, to be delivered into the hands of the foreigners. On a pile formed of Mexican weapons, taken from the royal magazine in the metropolis, was this general, together with his son and five of his chief officers, burned alive for having

obeyed the command of their sovereign, who thus basely surrendered them to his perfidious enemies.

From the profound veneration of the Mexicans for their sovereign, and their consequent implicit obedience to all his orders, Cortes, who had rendered himself master of his person, governed, during several months, the whole kingdom in his name, as the usual system of administration was continued, but all mandates were dictated by the Spanish leader. He even forced the captive monarch, and his nobles through his influence, to the acknowledgement of subjection, and the payment of a tribute, to the crown of Spain : but, when he insisted on the abolition of the pagan modes of worship, and the adoption of the Roman Catholic, he found so inflexible a determination of refusal in both prince and people, that prudence obliged him, for the present, to desist. The discontent, excited by this attempt, was sometime after enflamed to fury by a most atrocious act of violence. Obligated to march toward the coast to oppose Narvaez, whom Velasquez had sent with a body of troops to deprive him of his command, Cortes left the custody of the captive monarch to Alvarado with a hundred and fifty Spaniards. In order to exterminate, as is pretended, the authors of a conspiracy alledged to subsist among the Mexicans, or allured by the spoil of the precious ornaments worn on the occasion, Avarado took advantage of a solemn festival, when the principal persons of the kingdom were celebrating religious rites in the court of the great temple. Having secretly taken possession of all the avenues, he sent into the court a body of soldiers, who massacred all, except

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a few who escaped by climbing over the battlements of the enclosure. Aroused by this flagitious treachery, the Mexicans laid aside their dread of European arms, and furiously assailed the Spanish quarters, which had been strongly fortified. The small garrison would doubtless have been soon overwhelmed, if Cortes had not returned opportunely to its relief. That commander, by intrigues of his emissaries among the soldiers of Narvaez, had so succeeded as to take him prisoner, and to draw his troops to his own standard. With an army now augmented to the number of a thousand Spaniards, beside an additional body of two thousand Tlascalans, Cortes re-entered the Mexican metropolis in the June of the year 1520.

Though the Mexicans, from a want of conduct in their leaders, permitted the enemy, without opposition, to re-establish himself, with a much greater force than before, in his fortified post, they resumed their arms with renovated fury, when, by certain expressions betrayed by the Spaniards, now elated by success, they discovered, that the object of these foreigners, from their first arrival, was the conquest and pillage of the country. Nothing ever surpassed the ardent and persevering courage displayed in their assaults. The place of those who fell by the artillery and other arms of the foe, was instantly filled by fresh battalions which rushed successively to the combat. To cajole the multitude anew, Montezuma, in the utinost pomp of royal robes, was procured to appear on the battlements, and to use all possible arguments to prevail on his subjects to submit. At the sight of their sovereign a dead silence ensued ;



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But at the end of his oration, which proved him to be an instrument in the hands of their most insidious and cruel enemies, a hollow murmur prevailed, and the assault was renewed. Before the Spanish soldiers could cover him with their shields, he received two arrows and a blow of a stone. The wounds were not mortal, but he perceived, too late for the safety of his people, that life in his circumstances was unworthy of preservation. Rejecting all medical assistance and food, he expired in a few days after. A retreat was found to be quite necessary by Cortes. This he made in the night along one of the causeways, by which the city of Mexico, then environed by water, communicated with the surrounding country. But he was assailed with such fury, that beside all his artillery and baggage, he lost at least six hundred Spaniards, and two thousand Tlascalans. He was afterwards intercepted by a Mexican army, by which his remaining force would have doubtless been annihilated, if he had not availed himself of a superstitious idea, which he knew to prevail among this unfortunate people. By an impetuous onset, at the head of a chosen band, he seized the royal standard, at the disappearance of which the whole army dispersed without any other cause.

Having thus effected his retreat to Tlascala, Cortes, after six months of strenuous exertion, in collecting reinforcements, and making other preparations, advanced against the Mexican capital in the January of 1521, at the head of five hundred and fifty foot soldiers, forty horsemen, and ten thousand Tlascalans, with other natives. He was afterwards joined by such additional multitudes of the deluded

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inhabitants, that himself, in his letters, has rated the whole at the incredible number of a hundred and fifty thousand. With these, and some fresh reinforcements of Europeans, after various preparatory operations in its neighbourhood, he laid siege to the city of Mexico at the end of April. The Mexicans, under the command of Guatimozin, whom they had raised to the throne, an heroic prince, the nephew of Montezuma, made a most admirably brave defence against the foreign foe, and those infatuated multitudes of their compatriots, who ought to have been their associates in arms instead of their antagonists : but against the vast superiority of European arts, aided by such hosts, all was unavailing. The besiegers, by a fleet of brigantines, built in the country, furnished with cannons, became masters of the lake in which the city stood. The besieged were consumed by famine and consequent pestilence, and by the infection of the small pox, imported to them from Europe, where it had not been until lately known. Yet they resisted the perpetually reiterated assaults of the foe with the most intrepid fierceness, disputing every inch of ground with such obstinate fury, that three-fourths of the city were destroyed, in successive conflicts. At length Guatimozin was taken prisoner, and the assailants remained undisputed victors, on the thirteenth of August, after a siege of seventy-five days, almost every one of which was a day of battle.

Conducted to the presence of Cortes, Guatimozin said, " I have done what became a monarch : I have defended my people to the last extremity. Nothing now remains but to die. Take this dagger," laying his hand on one which

the Spaniard carried, "plant it in my breast, and put a period to a life which can be no longer useful." With the magnanimity of the conquered prince may be contrasted the baseness of his conqueror. Cortes, who appears to have clandestinely appropriated to his own use great part of the treasures of Montezuma and Guatimozin, to the defrauding of his followers, to whom had been promised a proportion of the spoil, put to the torture the royal captive and the chief favourite of that monarch, to make them confess where the unproduced riches lay concealed. This flagitious act was committed either from a suspicion that some wealth still remained undiscovered, or rather, at least partly, with a design to deceive his soldiers with respect to the riches which himself had secreted. The mode of torture was this: the soles of the feet were soaked in oil, and then gradually burned. When the favourite, overcome by the exquisite pain, betrayed a sense of his sufferings, the monarch, with an indignant look, reproved his weakness by asking him, "Am I now reposing on a bed of roses?" Overawed by this reproof, the favourite became dumb, and at length expired in agony. Guatimozin survived the torture, but was destined to sustain a series of new indignities, and a cruel death. Under a pretence, without a shadow of proof, that he was conspiring with his former subjects against the Spanish power, he was, in the following year, hanged, together with the two persons next him in rank, the princes of Tezcuco and Tacuba. They were suspended from the same tree by their feet, with their heads hanging down, a posture calculated for the prolongation of anguish. Even the ruffian soldiers of Cortes, long inured to the perpetration of

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crimes, murmured against this atrocious act, which doubtless they regarded as a wanton display of cruelty, an act of injustice without profit thence acquirable.

Wherever in the provinces, through which detachments of the Spaniards, successively reinforced, were sent in all directions, the least appearance of resistance had place, a horrid slaughter of the inhabitants was committed, and all the chiefs, who were taken alive, were doomed to cruel deaths. Thus, in the province of Panuco, were four hundred and sixty nobles, of whom sixty were of the first rank, burned alive at once, in the presence of their children and other relatives, who were compelled to be witnesses of the agonizing scene. By these ferocious conquerors were all the higher orders, the nobles, and gentry, and ministers of religion, among whom is maintained the civilization of a people, completely exterminated. The last were the depositories of the literature of the nation, which thus perished with them. Not content with this, the Spanish monks, in general a most malevolent species of beings, actuated by a superstitious zeal, the result of bigotry and ignorance, destroyed all the Mexican records on which they could lay hold, conceiving them as connected with paganism, inasmuch that only some fragments escaped their spiritual fury. Those people who survived this sanguinary conquest, consisting of the lower classes, the vulgar of the nation, were reduced to a most abject state of slavery, in the hardships of which great numbers were soon consumed. Cortes, however, the instrument of this national destruction, was not long permitted to possess the full fruits of his laborious

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crimes. The court of Spain thought proper to consign the management of the revenue and the civil government to other persons, by whom he was controled in a mortifying manner, and at length, in 1530, it committed to a viceroy the administration of all the conquered country, which received the denomination of New Spain, a denomination given at first by its discoverers to the peninsula of Yucatan only. Cortes spent the last seven years of his life in Europe, contemned and even insulted by the Spanish court, while he vainly solicited his sovereign for the restoration of his authority, and expired in the year 1547, in the sixty-second year of his age. The history of Mexico, which continued thence forward under the dominion of the crown of Spain, contains hardly any events which can interest a European reader, until its revolution in the nineteenth century.

Political revolutions in Mexico are followed by no small innovations in its vegetable products. From its conquest has resulted the introduction of many species from the Old continent; and its exemption from the oppressions of European government must remove those discouragements which the absurd policy of the Spanish court has imposed upon the culture of some of the most valuable. From the vast variety in the elevations and aspects of the land, which gives a correspondent variety of temperature, in all degrees from the fervours of the torrid zone to the coolness of regions approaching the frigid, the plants and trees of almost all climates are easily propagated in the Mexican soil. Yet from the want of that vigorous heat, which operates during

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a short time in the short summer of countries placed much farther from the equator than the poles, several vegetables, which thrive in these countries, attain not perfection in those elevated plains of Mexico, where the heat, though greater on the whole amount in the course of the year, is not, from its equability in the torrid zone, sufficiently powerful at any one season. The only kind of grain found cultivated in Mexico by its discoverers was maize, which was indigenous to America, whence it has been received by the Old continent, where it was unknown till after the discovery of the New. This grain, which is still the most extensively cultivated, as it flourishes both in the hot lowlands and in plains of nine thousand feet in elevation, is here so luxuriant, as to grow to the height of from six to nine feet, and often to yield four hundred fold of the seed. "It is believed that we may estimate the produce of maize in general in the equinoxial region of the kingdom of New Spain at a hundred and fifty for one."\*

Of the species of corn communicated from the old continent, such as rice, wheat, barley, and rye, the first, which is best adapted to the low, moist, and sultry tracts along the coasts, has not become as yet, though it may probably hereafter be, much an object of agricultural industry. The three latter, with other kinds of grain common in Europe, flourish only in those parts which enjoy a mild temperature, between the hot regions near the ocean on one side, and those plains on the other which are cold from

\* Humboldt, chap. 9.



excessive height. In ascending from the coast to the central table-land the commencement of their culture is not often found at a less elevation than three or four thousand feet. The barley and rye, more especially the former, are cultivated on plains of greater height, or of less warm temperature, than the wheat. The last is of excellent quality, and so-exuberant as often to produce fifty fold or more, and very seldom so little as sixteen. The quantity of its produce depends in great measure on artificial irrigation, as the interior of this country is ill supplied with rain. This irrigation, and the consequent production of corn and other esculents, might be vastly extended if the country were populous. Where human industry supplies not the requisite moisture the fields produce only pasturage; and even that entirely fails in the dry season, from about the beginning of March or April till the rains begin to fall about the estival solstice. The most elevated plains in the central parts yield hardly even pasturage, but are bare, arid, and saline, like the tracts called *steppes* in the immense regions of Tartary.

These bare and saline tracts however, though occupying extensive spaces, bear no great proportion to the whole of this fine country, "a great part of which belongs to the most fertile regions of the earth."\* Among the esculents is the banana, indigenous to Mexico, indigenous also to tropical Asia, whence some species of this vegetable, somewhat different from the American, have been transplanted

\* Humboldt, chap. 3.

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to the New world. The regions adapted to its successful culture are those where the mean temperature of the year is measured by the seventy-fifth degree of Fahrenheit's thermometer. In the Mexican soil, in such hot situations, it bears ripe fruit of from six to eleven inches in length, in the tenth or eleventh month after its plantation by a sucker; and is so productive, that two days work of a man, without much labour, in each week in the year, is sufficient for the maintenance of a family; and that any space of ground, planted with bananas, maintains twenty-five times as many persons, as an equal portion sown with wheat. Indigenous also to the same hot tracts of Mexico, whose elevation exceeds not between two and three thousand feet, are the two species of maniok, the sweet and the bitter, of the former of which the juice is innocuous, of the latter, in a raw state, poisonous. The two species seem not distinguishable by the sight, nor otherwise than by the taste. The bitter juice is divested of its bad qualities by boiling. Grated, compressed in sacks like apples for cider, formed into cakes, and baked on plates of iron, the maniok roots yield an excellent kind of bread, agreeable to the taste, and very nutritive, as containing much saccharine matter. The harvest of this vegetable, which in its root resembles the parsnip, and in its mode of culture the potatoe, comes not till seven or eight months after the planting of the slips. In plains more elevated and not so sultry is the potatoe cultivated, which appears to have been indigenous to Chili, and propagated thence to the Mexican territories, where it seems to have been unknown before the Spanish invasion.\*

Tobacco, an indigenous vegetable, with which the eastern hemisphere has been furnished by America, would be cultivated to great extent, if its culture were not restricted by Spanish ordonnances. The case is different with the sugar-cane, which has been imparted by the Old world to the New, and of which the cultivation has rapidly encreased since the conclusion of the eighteenth century. As the work is here performed by hired labourers, and consequently at vastly less expense than in the West Indian islands, where slaves only are employed, this and other continental countries will probably, in course of time, supersede the exportation of sugar from those islands. Before the introduction of the cane into their territories, the Mexicans procured sugar from the stalk of the maize and other vegetables. The culture of flax and hemp has been discouraged, but indigenous cotton of the finest quality is copiously produced. Several species of the indigo plant are also natives of the Mexican soil, but the province of Guatimala, of which the annual product of the best quality in the world, is valued at above half a million, is the chief scene of its cultivation. Sarsaparilla, the sanative root of which is so well known, grows wild in great quantities, as also the jalapa plant, a kind of what the botanists term *convolvulus*, from which the medicinal powder of jalap is made. The region most productive of these two vegetables, the eastern slope of the Mexican land, is also most remarkable for the growth of the vanilla, a plant which adheres to trees like ivy, and bears leaves like those of the laurel, but larger, and pods with an aromatic pulp, applied to the imparting of a perfume to chocolate. It grows spontaneous in the forests, but is meliorated by the care of man.



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Among the indigenous fruit trees is the cocoa, the almonds of which are manufactured into chocolate. This by the Spaniards was found in use among the Mexicans under the name of *chocolate*. Yet at present the cultivation of this valuable tree is neglected in all the Mexican provinces except Guatemala. The plantation of coffee has been lately introduced, and may probably become considerable. The same prediction may be admitted concerning the olive and the grape, which thrive well in this country, since the transplantation of the trees from Europe, but have been prevented by government from becoming an object of extensive culture. The *agave* or *maguey* tree, which varies much in species, has served in place of the vine to furnish liquor to the aboriginals. This liquor extils from a cut made where a great bunch of flowers would otherwise be developed. An ordinary product from a tree of hardly five feet high is a hundred and fifty bottles in the year; but the quantity is often considerably greater. The vinous juice, thus obtained, abounding in saccharine matter, ferments, is fit for use in a few days, and, though it has a fetid smell, is preferred by some of even the white inhabitants to every other beverage. It is called *pulque* by the Spaniards, resembles cider in appearance, and yields by distillation a very strong brandy. From the bark of this tree the ancient Mexicans manufactured their paper.

To enumerate all the vegetables of a country, which, by its various elevations and temperatures, unites the products of the temperate and torrid zones, could not be attempted

in this work. The variety of its forest trees is altogether prodigious. Among these are the cabbage palm, the cotton tree, the ironwood, the mahogany, the logwood, the cedar, the oak, and the pine. The first, which bears a mass of edible substance at its top, of a white hue, and of an agreeable taste, like that of the artichoke, is beautifully majestic, growing to the height of above a hundred feet. The second, little less in height, bears a most beautifully splendid profusion of variously coloured flowers, in which predominates the hue of the carnation, succeeded by small pods, in which is contained cotton of a silky fineness. The logwood and mahogany are so abundant as to have induced some English adventurers, at no small risk, in defiance of the Spanish power, to form a settlement in Yucatan, in the bay of Honduras. The mahogany tree, conspicuous in the dense forests by its leaves of a reddish yellow, is of so vast a size, that, though it is cut at the height of twelve feet from the ground, a single tree is often found to measure twelve thousand superficial feet, and to bring a price of more than a thousand British pounds.\* Near the city of Mexico have been cypresses found fifty feet in girth.†

The most useful quadrupeds of this, as of other American countries, are all of foreign introduction, as the horse, the ass, the cow, the sheep, and the hog, all of which have multiplied to a suprising degree. Two species indeed of the neat, one of which is called the musk ox, were indigenious,

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\* Henderson, p. 55.

† Humboldt's Researches, vol. 1, p. 251.

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but never made subservient to the use of man by taming. Several indigenous varieties of the dog were found in a domestic state among the Mexicans, one of which, termed *techichi*, was eaten by the natives, for which purpose it was frequently emasculated and fattened. As this people were destitute of labouring quadrupeds, all the operations of agriculture and the carrying of burdens were performed by the unaided strength of the human species. Among the innumerable species of wild quadrupeds are some varieties of the deer, the armidillo, the porcupine, and the monkey. We find also the pecaree, the agootee, the racoon, the anteater, the tapeer, and the opossum. The beasts of prey are chiefly varieties of the cat, to the two largest species of which the name of tiger is given, though their size is generally far from entitling them to that denomination. The more formidable, but more rare, of these two sorts is termed the black tiger, the other the Brazilian.

A few fowls were found tame among the natives of Mexico by the first European visitors, among which were the turkey and a species of duck; but the gallinaceous race of poultry, called the cock and hen by Europeans, was unknown till its importation from the old continent. The turkey, with which America has furnished the old world, is much larger in its wild than in its domestic state. Perhaps the former is of a different species from the latter. The wild sort has been found to grow to the weight of forty pounds in the southern parts of North America.\* It has

\* Voyage de Michaux, p. 190.



quite disappeared in the populous parts of the vast Mexican isthmus; but it still inhabits the thick forests of Yucatan, Honduras, and other southern tracts. Here it is said to display such a brilliancy of plumage, as not to yield in beauty to the most splendid species of the peacock.\* Next in size to this bird, and much resembling it in its habits, of a beautiful figure, and quite easily tamed, but so impatient of cold as not easily to bear a removal to cooler climates, is the curassow, the male of which is nearly black, but the female of a rich chocolate hue, with variegated spots, and superior to her mate in magnitude of body. The penelope cristata or quam, much esteemed for its flesh, belongs also to the class of indigenous poultry. The only species here known of the partridge resembles the Guinea hen much in appearance, and even in size.

Amid the inconceivably great variety of birds we find the dove, the wood-pigeon, the scarlet spoonbill, the humming bird, the toucan, various tribes of the heron, and of the parrot. The swallow has been an object of curiosity, particularly about the bay of Honduras. Here it is seen in prodigious numbers during the rainy season, but afterwards totally disappears. Each morning, at the dawn, these birds are observed to rise in a vast spiral column, in the form of a waterspout, to a certain height, whence they disperse in all directions. At sunset they re-assemble, and descend in the same form, with such velocity, as to make a noise like the roar of an immense torrent, or of a tremendous gust of

\* Henderson, p. 110.

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wind.\* Of the small birds of the woods, which in general possess great beauty of plumage, but no melody of voice, one of the tribes is composed of some species of the ortolan, which are so numerous, that a hundred of their nests might often be counted on a single tree. The lakes, the rivers, and the inlets of the ocean, are covered with vast flocks of water-fowl of various kinds, among which is a species the same in appearance with what is termed in Europe the Muscovy duck.

The tribes of serpents, lizards, and other reptiles, seem here to be nearly the same as in other tropical countries. Among the inhabitants of the waters are the manatee and alligator. The turtle, also, particularly in three species, abounds in the neighbouring seas. In general the marine animals are the same with those of other American regions within the torrid zone ; but the case is somewhat different in respect of the terrene. The latter, in the northern and elevated lands, are like those of the neighbouring countries of North America ; but in the hot maritime and southern territories they are similar to those of the South American regions between the tropics. The shell which yields the purple dye, and that which contains the pearl, are considerably copious on the western coast, the former chiefly in the bay of the Tehuantepec, the latter in the bay of Panama. The Pacific ocean in the vicinity of the vast Mexican isthmus, particularly between the main land and the Marias islands, abounds in whales of the largest size and

\* Henderson, p. 120.

most valuable kinds. The chief object of pursuit to fishers in this tract of ocean is the cachalot, in the enormous caverns of whose snout is contained the substance called spermaceti. A single fish of this species often yields above a hundred and twenty barrels, of above thirty gallons each, of this unctuous matter.\* This fishery has been hitherto pursued almost exclusively by adventurers from the British Islands and the United States of North America.

Of the insect tribes the most useful and most worthy of notice are the bee, the silkworm, and the cochineal. Mexico possesses an indigenous bee, either destitute of a sting, or armed only with a feeble one, the wax of which is not so easily whitened as that of Europe. This species abounds particularly in Yucatan, especially in the environs of the town of Compeachy, which sometimes exports near eight tuns of wax in the year. The white mulberry tree, with its concomitant silk worm, was brought early from Europe into this country, but its culture has not been permitted to extend. Several indigenous kinds, however, of the caterpillar called silkworm, subsisted there, together with a species of mulberry, previously to the discovery of America, of the silk of some of which a few stuffs are still manufactured. Most of these feed on leaves entirely different from those of the mulberry, particularly on those of a tree called the *arbutus madrono*. These insects weave their silk into pendent bags, seven inches long, of a brilliant whiteness, composed of several stratum of so dense a tissue, as to

\* Humboldt, chap. 10.



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resemble Chinese paper, and to be applicable to the same use. It is in fact a natural paper, which the ancient Mexicans used in writing, pasting together several stratus, to render the thickness such as they thought proper.\* They also wrote on the parchment of the skins of stags, and on paper fabricated from the bark of the agave. The lustre of the madrono silk, as this is termed, would render it highly valuable, if impediments were not opposed to the fabrication of it into cloth by the extreme difficulty experienced in the winding of the thread.

The cochineal insect, indigenous only in the American regions, but begun to be propagated lately in the Indian, is of about the size of a bug, found adhering to a thorny shrub termed *nopal*, which bears a fruit resembling the fig. This insect is of two kinds, the wild and the fine. The nopals also, on which two kinds subsist, are specifically or essentially different. The wild cochineal, which thrives in several parts of South America, as well as in Mexico, is covered with a white sort of down, like cotton, which increases with its age. Though the colour, which it yields is very beautiful, and permanent, it is little esteemēd in comparison of the fine. The latter sort, which is larger than the wild, and powdered with a white substance, resembling fine meal, requires very much the care of man, particularly in the culture of the nopals, which are not permitted to grow above the height of four feet, and the preserving of the animal from destructive insects and other enemies. At a cer-

tain stage of its existence the animal is killed, by being plunged in hot water, or by other means. In some districts it affords three harvests, or gatherings, in the year. Its production appears to have been more general in Mexico, to which it seems to have been peculiar, before the Spanish conquest than at present. Its culture has been lately almost confined to the province of Oaxaca, which is said to furnish Europe with four hundred tuns annually, at the price of half a million. So lately as about the middle of the eighteenth century, a considerable quantity was produced in Yucatan, but in a single night the insect was exterminated in that peninsula by the cutting of all the nopals. This deed is charged by the aboriginals to the account of the government, which is said to have adopted this measure for the securing of a monopoly to cultivators in other parts: but by the white inhabitants of Mexico it is ascribed to the aboriginals, who are said to have been actuated by resentment at the low price fixed by Spanish avarice on the product of their industry.\* In either supposition the fact is conformable to the erroneous system of Spanish administration.

Whatsoever may be in future times the product of the soil in this fertile country, under an improved political system and an augmented population, the great object of pursuit has hitherto been the metals of gold and silver. Minerals of other kinds, which appear to be sufficiently copious in the bowels of the earth, as copper, tin, lead,

\* Humboldt, chap. 10.

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iron, and mercury, have been as yet much neglected. Tin is discovered, in the same manner as gold-dust, in alluvious grounds, or the beds of torrents. Mercury, so much used in the extraction of silver by amalgamation, may probably hereafter be procured in such quantity from the Mexican mines as not only to supply the consumption at home, but also, in a considerable degree, that of Europe, instead of the Mexican miners being, as at present, furnished in great part thence with this mineral. Among the very various substances of the fossil class, found in several territories of this vast region, are zinc, antimony, and arsenic : but cobalt and manganese appear not to have occurred in such quantity as to merit notice. Neither has salt been discovered in a mineral state, in masses of great size, but is thickly disseminated in those high argillaceous lands which form the ridge of the cordillera, and which resemble in their nature the great saline plains of Tartary and Tibbet. It is also found in marine marshes, after the evaporation of the water by the sunbeams, particularly about the port of Colima on the coast of the Pacific ; and in the beds of desiccated lakes in the interior country, especially in that of Penonblanco, on the northern borders of the province of Zacatecas, which, on becoming regularly dry about the brumal solstice, yields annually to government above twelve thousand tons of salt, not pure, but mixed with particles of earth.

Mining industry in Mexico has heretofore been directed almost exclusively to gold and silver. The quantity procured of the former is however comparatively small, not



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equal in value to a twentieth part of the latter. The gold is obtained not only from alluvious grounds by the common process of washing, but also, either pure or mixed with silver, in the mines. The silver exported annually from Mexico is computed at near sixteen hundred and fifty thousand pounds of troy weight. The quantity indeed extracted from the earth in this country is said to be ten times as great as that which is furnished by all the mines of Europe together, and to constitute two-thirds of what is drawn from all parts of the globe. Yet, though mines are worked in near five hundred places, above one half of the whole quantity procured is said to be yielded by the three districts of Guanaxuato, Zacatecas, and Catorce. Guanaxuato alone is said to produce above a fourth part of the silver of Mexico, and a sixth of all exported from all the regions of America. By an ingenious calculation the quantity of silver furnished in the course of three centuries by the mines of all America is computed to amount to above three hundred and sixteen millions of pounds of troy weight. The product of the Mexican mines, which have so vastly contributed to this enormous sum, has been in a state of increase since the middle of the eighteenth century. Notwithstanding the unequalled wealth afforded by these mines, they exhibit not such large blocks of native silver as have been discovered in the Old continent. This metal is commonly disseminated in the metalliferous earth, in a pure state indeed, but in particles so minute as not to be perceptible except through a microscope, and so thinly arranged, that sixteen thousand ounces of this earth yield only three or four ounces of silver. The territories in this country

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most abundant in the precious metals are situated between the twenty-first degree and the twenty-fourth and a half of northern latitude, on the ridge and western slope of the Cordillera, at elevations of from near six thousand to near ten thousand feet above the ocean's level, mostly in places of such a temperature as is favourable to vegetation and agriculture.\* All the works of the Mexican mines are voluntarily performed by hired labourers, who are paid at least three or four shillings a day.

## Antiquities.

In their search for the precious metals the first colonists from Spain were guided by the indications of mines received by them from the natives. These had not only discovered the means of extracting treasure from alluvial earths, but had also long "applied themselves to subterranean operations in the working of veins. They cut galleries and dug pits of communication and ventilation; and they had instruments adapted for the cutting of the rock." The excavations formed by their mining industry are among the monuments which attest that the ancient Mexicans had made much greater progress in the arts than is generally supposed. They had not proceeded to the coinage of gold and silver, but had converted them into various ornaments, particularly vases of exquisite workmanship, some of which were in preservation until very lately. Of their instruments made of obsidian and of copper mixed with tin I have already made mention. Some monuments of combined labour, works executed for religious or political purposes, might be ex-

\* For a full account of the mines see Humboldt, chap. 11.

pected to remain, where a nation once subsisted so numerous and under so regular a government. The fortified hill of Xochicalco is remarkable, surrounded by a wall and ditch above two miles in circuit. But in the capital and its environs, where the old city was destroyed by its ferocious conquerors, few relics of antiquity are found, except the ruins of aqueducts and of dikes constructed for resistance against inundation, two vast blocks called the stone of the sacrifices and the stone of the calendar, the colossal statue of a goddess covered with hieroglyphics, and two religious structures, called *teocallies*, at some distance, in the vicinity. The stone of the calendar is denominated from the use to which it was applied, and that of the sacrifices, on which immolated victims were thrown, is adorned with a relievo, representing the triumph of a Mexican king. These blocks, containing each above three hundred cubic feet, serve to shew what huge masses the ancient Mexicans contrived to move, by what means we are not informed. But, among a multitude of idols, has been lately found buried a carved stone of above ten times the size of either of these, which the Spaniards endeavoured in vain to remove.

The remains of religious piles are however the chief monuments of Mexican antiquity. These were all truncated pyramids, bearing a rude resemblance to some of the celebrated pyramids of Egypt, ascending by stages, and terminating above in a flat surface, on which were placed the images and altars of their deities. Great stairs of hewn stone conducted, on the outside, from the bottom to the top of the fabric; but whether or not the mass was solid through-



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out, or contained apartments within, has not been determined. The great *teocalli* in the Mexican metropolis, which was probably the model of all others, was destroyed by the Spaniards, but the remains of two are still seen in the same valley, north-eastward of the lake of Tescuco. One of these, consecrated to the sun, has a base near seven hundred feet long, and, in its present state, a perpendicular height of a hundred and eighty. The other, which was dedicated to the moon, rises from a smaller base to the height of only a hundred and forty-four feet. Each is a mingled mass composed of stones and clay, incased with a thick wall of a porous kind of stone termed amygdaloid and with lime. The sides of these structures face not exactly the four cardinal points of the compass, but deviate only fifty-two minutes from that position, from which the pyramid of Cholula deviates not at all. The base of this, the greatest of all these piles in Mexico, is fourteen hundred and twenty-three feet broad, and what remains of the height is a hundred and seventy-seven. It is composed, as far as known, of alternate stratum of brick and clay, faced on each side with a wall of amygdaloid. The materials are different in the pyramid of Papantla, in the northern part of the province of Veracruz. With a base exactly square, of a breadth of eighty-two feet, and with a height of not more than sixty-five, the *teocalli* of Papantla is much less remarkable for its size than for its symmetry, and for the polish and perfectly regular cut of the immense blocks of hewn stone of which only it is composed. Six stages in this pile, adorned with hieroglyphics, are still visible, and a seventh seems concealed by a rank vegetation around. Environed by a

thick forest, and concealed by the silence of the aboriginals, who held it in great veneration, this monument remained quite unknown to Europeans, till it was accidentally discovered after the middle of the eighteenth century.\*

Among the arts of the ancient Mexicans was the manufacturing of paper and cloth from silk and cotton. By the introduction of wool and the use of iron by the Europeans, the manufactures of the natives are improved : but their industry in these, as in various products of the soil, has been indirectly discouraged by the government of Spain, whose erroneous policy was, that the colonies should be totally dependant on the parent country for whatsoever merchandize the latter could furnish. This system, which raised the price of imported goods, by preventing a sufficient supply, obliged the inhabitants to encourage a contraband traffic with the Dutch and English colonies. A different state of things will doubtless have place, and has even already had a commencement ; but our information is limited to the situation in which affairs were found in the earliest years of the nineteenth century. Not only the colonial system of the Spanish court, but also the nature of the country itself, has considerably impeded its commercial operations. From the great paucity of harbours, and the tempestuous weather, already mentioned, inimical to navigation, the exterior commerce is confined to a few harbours ; while, from the almost total want of navigable rivers, the merchandize is transported to and from the interior only by land-carriage ; and this

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\* Humboldt, chap. 8. Researches, vol. 1, p. 81—114.

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carriage, from the declivities of the land toward the coasts, and the narrowness of the roads, unfavourable to wheeled vehicles, is performed on the backs of mules and other quadrupeds. Thus near seventy thousand mules are employed in the conveyance of goods to and from the port of Veracruz alone. Another impediment is the insalubrity of the maritime towns, which, from their low situation, are exposed to violent heats, unpropitious to the health of Europeans, and of the inhabitants of the elevated plains of the interior country. From the heat, combined with other causes, arise disorders of the body, particularly the yellow fever, which frequently commits great ravages at Veracruz.

The internal commerce of the Mexican provinces is maintained almost entirely by land-carriage, or by a coasting navigation. The external is transacted chiefly in the maritime towns of Veracruz, Portabello, Panama, and Acapulco. The imports consist of manufactured goods, and various other articles, as wine, brandy, iron, steel, mercury, and wax. Among the exports are sugar, flour, indigo, sarsaparilla, vanilla, jalap, logwood, cochineal, raw cotton, and hides, but principally the precious metals, in coin, wrought plate, or ingots. The annual value of the imports, which is doubtless in a state of augmentation, has been calculated, including the contraband trade, which is stated at the fourth, at least, of the whole, to amount to four millions and a half of British pounds. Gold and silver constitute more than two-thirds of the exports in value, besides that near two millions, in these metals, are, or at least were, annually drawn out of the country in taxes to the Spanish king. Thus



all the product of the mines, estimated at nearly six millions a year is exported, except a little more than the worth of two hundred thousand pounds, which remains to augment the quantity of the precious metals possessed by the inhabitants. The great emporium of Mexico is Veracruz, where between four and five hundred vessels receive and discharge their cargoes annually. Here the chief commerce with Europe is maintained; but the port of Acapulco, one of the finest in the world, where the mercantile business between the Mexican and Asiatic regions is transacted, hardly receives ten ships in the year. These vessels are coasters, except four or five sent annually to Peru, and one which has heretofore alone carried all the merchandize imported to this country from Asia. This, denominated the Manilla galleon, a ship of from twelve to fifteen hundred tons, carries from Acapulco to Manilla, the capital of the Philippine islands, little else than silver, but brings home the goods of China, and other Asiatic countries, to the value of about four hundred thousand pounds. Its run to the Philippines, by the trade winds, is performed in fifty or sixty days: its return, which formerly required five or six months, is now accomplished in three or four.\* The trade of Panama and Portobello consists principally in the interchange of merchandize between Spain and Peru. The goods are debarked from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans at these towns, and carried over land from the one to the other. The commercial system of the Spanish colonies in America has already undergone considerable alterations, and must be expected to undergo much greater still.

Humboldt, chap. 12.

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## Government.

The government exercised by Spain over her colonies, which in so great a degree paralysed the commercial, agricultural, and manufactural industry of the inhabitants of Mexico, by both directly and indirectly protecting monopolies in favour of Spanish merchants, has continued still unpropitious to colonial prosperity, notwithstanding some favourable relaxations in later years. By the laws of the state no merchandize was allowed to be imported by other than Spanish vessels, and to oblige the inhabitants to supply themselves by importation, their governors were instructed to discourage, by indirect means, the growth and fabrication of such articles as the Spanish traders wish to sell to them. The monopoly and the difficulties of land-carriage to the interior raised the prices of goods to a very inconvenient pitch. The disadvantage sustained by the great body of the people was disregarded by the few in whose hands was held exclusively the whole administration of government. The natives of the country, whether of American or European descent, were excluded from all offices of power, both military and civil, and to these offices were admitted Europeans only, natives of Spain. Beside this exclusion from authority, for the retaining of the natives in subjection, mutual antipathies were encouraged between the different *castes* or classes of the people, as the aboriginals, the creoles, and people of mixed breed. Not only between the classes, but also between men of the same class, differing only in territorial situation, aversions are prevalent. Thus the inhabitants of the hot lowlands on the coasts, and those of the cool highlands in the interior, bear mutual hatred; the former denominating the latter a dull or sluggish race, the latter accusing the former of fickleness and levity.

The viceroy of Mexico, as the representative of the king of Spain, rules, like the governors of other Spanish colonies, with nearly absolute power in this country, which is styled the kingdom of New Spain by the Spaniards. His power indeed is subject to controul ; but, at so great a distance from the supreme seat of government in Europe, he can more or less, according to the strength of the interest by which his party is upheld, evade the restrictions imposed on his authority. His jurisdiction extends into North America, far beyond the geographical boundaries of the Mexican isthmus, but not farther southward than the northern limits of Guatemala, which, by arrangements, destined doubtless, in course of time, to give place to others, has been formed into a viceroyalty almost independent of the Mexican governor. The government of Guatemala comprehends those of Nicaragua and Costarica, as far as the political confines of New Granada, to the authority of whose viceroy the isthmus of Darien is subject. Seldom more than the annual sum of between twelve and thirteen thousand pounds has been assigned by the Spanish court to the viceroy of Mexico, a salary not adequate to the regal magnificence displayed by him in public. Some, however, of these governors have contrived to extort, by indirect means, between three and four hundred thousand pounds, in the space of a few years, from the people placed under their jurisdiction : but others have acted in a most nobly disinterested manner, particularly the Count de Revillagigedo and the Chevalier d' Azanza, whose memories are held in very great veneration. To give a formal statement of the tribunals of justice and other parts of the political system,



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perpetually liable to be newly modeled and newly arranged, seems inexpedient in this work, and could not be interesting.

All the vices of the feudal power, so deleterious in Spain, have passed into Mexico, with this addition of evil, that the immense distance from the seat of the supreme authority renders the application of remedies more difficult, notwithstanding the courts of justice termed audiences, and various other institutions, in appearance wisely planned by that high directing body, styled the Council of the Indies, to whose jurisdiction are subject all the affairs of the Spanish possessions in America and the Philippine islands, and whose integrity of conduct has been greatly extolled.\* The lands are in great proportion the property of a few powerful families, whose extensive possessions have gradually absorbed the smaller estates, who harass the farmers, and eject them at pleasure, to the vast retardation of agricultural industry. But the evils of the political system, which indeed at several successive times have been in part corrected, press chiefly on the aboriginals, who still, notwithstanding much accomplished in their favour, remain in a miserably degraded condition. This unfortunate race of people might have been exterminated, like the indigenous inhabitants of the West Indian islands, if the court of Madrid had not made early exertions in their favour, exertions which perhaps saved the remnant from destruction, but which unintentionally tended to confirm their slavery. In-

\* Depons' Caraccas, 8vo. London, 1807, vol. 1, p. 257—260.

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stead of being seized indiscriminately as slaves by the Spaniards, the natives were distributed among them, in such manner that each colonist might be a protector to the persons put under his authority. But, instead of protectors, the people found themselves consigned to tyrannical masters, who, by a perversion of the ordonnance, treated them, notwithstanding their being declared freemen by the Spanish Government, as vassals affixed to the soil, and as much the property of each landholder respectively as the cattle in his fields. In the eighteenth century, the condition of this race was much ameliorated. By instructions from the sovereign power, particularly, to his great honour, in the reign of Charles the Third, the viceroys and audiences took measures to cause the protection of the laws to extend to the ancient natives. This laudable design was still further promoted by the division of the country into intendancies, territories over each of which a sub-governor, styled intendant, presides, a part of whose duty is the protection of this people.

Whatsoever attention we may imagine bestowed by the government of Spain on its American colonies, no effectual system of laws has as yet been devised for the aboriginal Mexicans, nor have any of a salutary nature, which have been enacted, answered fully the proposed end. The Indians, as the pure descendents of the ancient natives are denominated, are completely insulated in society, with respect to the rest of the inhabitants, banished in general into the most barren parts of the country, and distributed in villages, in which no people of any other description

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are permitted to dwell. Except the real or pretended descendants of their ancient nobles, who however are not distinguishable from the rest in either dress or manners, they are subjected to a poll-tax, which is regarded as a brand of infamy. They are governed immediately by magistrates of this class of gentry, who, far from being their protectors, serve as the tyrannical instruments of oppression under the white inhabitants. Such indeed is every where the nature of mankind that authority is most cruelly exercised by slaves. With respect to legal rights, they are treated as beings of an intellect by nature inferior to that of people of European descent. They are condemned by absurd laws to a perpetual minority, insomuch that no deed signed by any of them is obligatory, nor pecuniary contract above the value of fifteen franks, or between twelve and thirteen shillings. The people of any mixed breed are in like manner segregated, marked with disgraceful inferiority by the poll-tax, and excluded from political privileges. Various are the acts of oppression exercised over these and the Indians by the privileged part of the community. Thus, for instance, a white man, concerned in a manufactory, contrives to bring into his debt a man of a lower class, and employs him in his workshop for the payment of the debt by labour; but, instead of wages in money, he furnishes him with necessaries at a price so exorbitant that the debt is never discharged. The miserable workman, thus rendered a perpetual debtor, is incarcerated for life, and forced to waste his health in continual toil, under the lash of an unfeeling master. The white inhabitants, who tyrannize over all others, are far from being equally privileged among them-



selves. To Spaniards only of European birth are confided offices of trust and emolument, to the exclusion of the creoles, or natives of European ancestry. Discontent against the Spanish government was the consequence among the latter; but their fear of the lower classes, in case of a revolution, has restrained them from vigorous measures for the asserting of their independence.\*

Without the disunion of the classes of inhabitants, and the well-founded dread of the rest of the natives entertained by the creoles, the military force maintained in Mexico would be inadequate to its retention under the government of Spain. This force is stated at little more than thirty thousand, of which the regular troops form less than a third. The rest consists of a militia composed chiefly of creoles. For external defence these troops might be sufficient. The coasts are unfavourable to the debarcation of an invading army: the air of the maritime tracts is hostile to the health of foreigners; and many parts of the interior country would be found incommodious to the march of a foe: while deserts and other obstacles on the northern frontiers may be expected long to prevent any formidable irruptions of an enemy on that quarter. The expenses of the military establishment, and of other parts of the system of internal government, absorb much the greater part of the royal revenue raised annually from the Mexican territories, which has commonly amounted to between four and five millions of British pounds. Above a fourth of the

\* Humboldt, chap. 6, 10, 12.

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whole arises from the duties on the precious metals extracted from the earth. Near seven hundred thousand pounds a year have been sent to supply the charges of government in other Spanish colonies, and above a million to the royal treasury in Spain. This treasury has indeed received twice as great an annual remittance from Mexico as from all the other foreign possessions of the Spanish monarchy together.\*

Religion.

The revenue of the church in Mexico is probably equal to much more than a fifth of that which is levied for the use of the king. The perpetually increasing income arising from tithes appears to amount to about six hundred thousand pounds. The lands, which are in the actual possession of the clergy, pay perhaps not more to them in rent than forty or fifty thousand pounds a year; but they possess funds to the amount of upwards of ten or twelve millions, lent to proprietors of lands on the security of mortgages, or bequeathed, and charged on estates by a like mode of security. The difference in the incomes of the clergy is prodigious. Thus, while the annual revenue of the archbishop of Mexico falls little short of thirty thousand pounds, that of a parish priest in an Indian village is often not more than twenty or twenty-five pounds. The parochial clergy indeed contrive to augment their means of living by levying small sums from their Indian parishioners. Thus they are paid ten franks, or between eight and nine shillings, for every baptism, twenty franks for each

\* Humboldt, chap. 14.

certificate of marriage, twenty for interment, and from twenty-five to thirty, by every individual, in offerings which are *called* voluntary. A considerable inequality, in pecuniary circumstances, has place even among the prelates, who are ten in number, and whose aggregate yearly income may be a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, but among whom the bishop of Oaxaca has hardly four thousand. Beside about four thousand lay brothers and sisters, the Mexican clergy consist only of between eleven and twelve thousand, of whom about half are regular. The convents, not only here, but in all other parts of Spanish America, instead of being founded in retired or solitary places, as in Europe, where they contributed much to the progress of agriculture, and afforded asylums of hospitality to the traveller, are mostly crowded together in towns, where they are subservient to no purpose of public utility.\*

Except some tribes of savages, particularly in Honduras and Darien, who remain still heathens, and independent of the Spanish government, no other than the Roman Catholic religion is professed by any of the inhabitants of Mexico, nor indeed of any country subject to the crown of Spain. The Indians however know nothing of Christianity beyond its exterior forms. They still adhere to their ancient customs and ideas, having only exchanged the ceremonies of a sanguinary mode of worship for those of a gentle and humane religion. "This change from old to new rites

\* Humboldt, chap. 7, 10. His account extends not to Guatimala or to Darien, for which I could only proceed by less authentic materials.



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was the effect of compulsion, not of persuasion, and was produced by political events alone. In such a complicated mythology as that of the Mexicans, an affinity was easily imagined between the Aztec deities and those of the east. The books of ritual, composed by the Indians in hieroglyphics at the beginning of the conquest, evidently shew, that at that period Christianity was confounded with the Mexican mythology. The 'Holy Ghost is here identified with the sacred eagle of the Aztecs. The missionaries not only tolerated, they even favoured to a certain extent, this amalgamation of ideas, by means of which the Christian worship was more easily introduced among the natives, who, fond of whatsoever is connected with a prescribed order of ceremonies, find in the Christian religion particular enjoyments. The festivals of the church, the fire-works with which they are accompanied, the processions mingled with dances and whimsical disguises, are a most fertile source of amusement for the lower Indians. Every where the Christian rites have assumed the shades of the country into which they have been transplanted. Indians have been seen masked, and adorned with small tinkling bells, performing savage dances around the altar, while a monk of Saint Francis elevated the host.\*

## Towns.

This wild mode of worship we must suppose to have place only in the villages, not in the cities, where civilization is chiefly concentrated. Few indeed of the cities and towns require particular notice, although, beside the me-

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tropolis, some are of considerable magnitude. Thus Guanaxuata, with its suburbs, contains above seventy thousand inhabitants; Puebla de los Angeles above sixty-seven thousand; and Queretaro thirty-five thousand. These three cities are situate on the central table-land, at no great distance from one another and from the capital. Zacatecas also contains thirty-three thousand, and Oaxaca twenty-four thousand souls. The Spaniards, in their choice of the situations of towns, followed only the traces of the indigenous population. They imagined themselves to be the founders of new cities when they gave new names to those of the ancient Mexicans. One of the best built is Puebla, with lofty houses mostly of stone, and with streets broad, clean, regular, crossing one another at right angles, and ending in a great square in the center. Queretaro is also celebrated for the beauty of its edifices and a noble aqueduct. Pasquaro, inhabited by six thousand persons, is only remarkable for its situation on a beautiful island in a charming lake of the same denomination. The maritime towns of Acapulco, Veracruz, Portobello, and Panama, are famous for their commerce, though otherwise inconsiderable.

Acapulco, seated on the coast of the Pacific ocean, contains not more than about four thousand inhabitants, except at the arrival of the galeon from Manilla, at which time it is crowded with adventitious numbers. Built against the back of a chain of gigantic mountains which reverberate the sunbeams, it is exposed to a suffocating heat, which contributes to render the air unwholesome. Its admirably

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fine harbour, safe and commodious, consists of a deep and spacious bason, which, environed by masses of granite of a savage aspect, appears to have been formed by an explosion of subterranean fire. The harbour has two entrances, and the depth of water on the coast outside is so great, that a ship of the line might float almost in contact with the rocks in perfect safety. For the admission of breezes from the ocean, for the mitigation of heat in the town, an opening has been cut by the labour of man, through the wall of rocky mountains.

Veracruz.

Contrasted with this town in the nature of its port and coast is Veracruz, regularly and beautifully built on the shore of the gulf of Mexico, and containing sixteen thousand inhabitants, beside the multitudes which resort to it at the season of traffic, when fleets arrive from Europe, and the West Indian islands. Situate in an arid plain, it is furnished with water chiefly by cisterns, which are filled by the rains in the wet season. As the country in this neighbourhood is destitute of rock, its buildings are constructed of substances drawn from the bottom of the sea, such as are referred to the madreporæ class. That which is called its port or harbour is only an unsafe road for anchorage, among flats and islands, on one of which, named San Juan

Portobello.

Ulúa, is a strong fortress termed a castle. Portobello, thus denominated from its excellent harbour on the coast of the Atlantic, in the isthmus of Darien, would not deserve mention except for its trade, which has already been noticed under the article of commerce. Confined on the land-side by mountains covered with wood, its air has been



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insalubrious, but its insalubrity has decreased with the decrease of the forests. On the opposite coast of the same isthmus, at the distance of sixty miles, stands the city of Panama, on an arid tongue of land destitute of vegetation, in a great bay of the Pacific ocean, where a road for anchorage is formed among islands, as at Veracruz. It is inclosed with a wall of freestone, and its streets are generally broad, straight, and well paved.

Panama.

The capital of all New Spain, indeed the chief town of all America, is the city of Mexico, seated in a most remarkably beautiful valley, or widely extended bason, which is enclosed, as I have already mentioned, with a wall of romantic mountains, and interspersed with lakes of various magnitude, five in number. The modern city stands so exactly on the same ground which the ancient Tenochtitlan occupied, that the site of the cathedral is that of the ancient *teocalli* or temple; the hotel of the Duke of Monteleone, in which are kept the archives of the state, has been erected where stood the palace of the unfortunate Montezuma; and the street now named Tacuba is the same as the old Tlacopan. Yet the ancient city stood within a lake, quite insulated by water, accessible only by boats, or by three long causeways formed on great dykes: whereas the modern is situate wholly on continental ground, between the extremities of two lakes, the Tezcuco and Xochimilco. The cause of this difference is the decrease of the Tezcuco, whose waters have receded, and left the land dry which they formerly occupied around this metropolis. The dikes are partly still in existence, forming elevated cause-

Mexico.

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ways over marshy grounds, and serving as barriers against inundation. The present capital however, occupying a square near two miles broad, is far inferior in extent to the ancient; nor perhaps is the population of the former, consisting of nearly a hundred and forty thousand persons, equal to more than a third of that of the latter. The population, fertility, and beauty of the whole vale of Tenochtitlan, by the first view of which the Spaniards were enraptured, have indeed much declined since the conquest of the country.

“ Adorned with numerous teocallies, like so many Mohammedan steeples, surrounded with water and dikes, founded on islands covered with verdure, and receiving hourly in its streets thousands of boats which vivified the lake, the ancient Tenochtitlan, according to the accounts of the first conquerors, must have resembled some of the cities of Holland, China, or the Delta of Lower Egypt. The capital, reconstructed by the Spaniards, exhibits perhaps a less vivid, though a more majestic appearance. Mexico is undoubtedly one of the finest cities ever built by Europeans in either hemisphere. With the exception of Petersburg, Berlin, Philadelphia, and some quarters of Westminster, there does not exist a city of the same extent which can be compared to the capital of New Spain, for the uniform level of the ground on which it stands, for the regularity and breadth of the streets, and the extent of the public places. The architecture is generally of a very pure style, and there are even edifices of very beautiful structure. The exterior of the houses is not loaded with ornaments. Two sorts of

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hewn stone, the porous amygdaloid called tetzontli, and especially a porphyry of vitreous feldspath without any quartz, give to the Mexican buildings an air of solidity, and sometimes even magnificence. There are none of those wooden balconies and galleries to be seen which disfigure so much all the European cities in both the Indies. The balustrades and gates are all of Biscay iron, ornamented with bronze, and the houses, instead of roofs, have terraces like those in Italy and other southern countries.”\*

The modern streets run generally in the directions of the ancient, directions adapted doubtless to those of the causeways, nearly from north to south, and from east to west. Some superb public buildings, and other works of art, contribute to the embellishment of this metropolis, which is supplied with fresh water by two aqueducts, the larger of which is above six miles long. Of the floating gardens, rafts covered with soil, on the lakes, some are even still in existence.

Better grounds are furnished for approximating by calculation the number of inhabitants in the capital than the area of the country, whose form is quite irregular, and of the whole of which no maps quite accurate have as yet been published. Extending obliquely through twenty degrees of latitude, it stretches in length above two thousand miles; but its breadth is altogether various, about sixty miles only at the narrowest part, the isthmus of Darien; but at its

Extent.

\* Humboldt, chap. 8.



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broadest in the north, at what may be termed the base of its figure, not less than six hundred and thirty. Perhaps if its area could be accurately measured, it would be found to contain near six hundred and thirty thousand square English miles, or above four hundred millions of acres.

## Division.

The divisions of New Spain arranged by the Spanish government are political and arbitrary, and have been arbitrarily altered, nor have any of its arrangements been accommodated to geographical delineation on the northern quarter, where the vast Mexican isthmus is politically confounded with what are termed the *provincias internas*, the territories claimed by Spain in the immense peninsula of North America. In the south are the territories of Darien politically united with New Granada, of Veragua, Costarica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Verapaz, Guatemala, and Yucatan. Of the remaining portion of New Spain, to the north and west of Guatemala, an old division is still retained by many of the inhabitants, a division into the provinces, of which some are styled kingdoms, of Mexico proper, New Galicia, New Leon, New Santander, Cohahuila, and New Biscay. The most northern of these extend into North America, as also the most northern of the intendancies into which this country has been more recently partitioned. These territories, placed under the inspection of sub-governors styled intendants, are named Merida which comprehends a part of Yucatan, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Mexico, Puebla, Valladolid, Guanaxuato, Guadalupe, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosi. Of the last a great portion belongs to the North American Peninsula.

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## Population.

The provinces or territories into which New Spain has been divided are exceedingly unequal in extent and population, more especially the latter. The elevated plains, where the temperature is mild, are in general far more populous than the low tracks near the ocean, where the soil is much more fertile, but exposed to much greater heat. "The interior of the country contains four cities, which are not more than one or two days' journey distant from one another, which possess an aggregate population of three hundred and ten thousand. The central table-land from La Puebla to Mexico, and thence to Salamanca and Zelaya, is covered with villages and hamlets like the most cultivated parts of Lombardy. To the east and west of this narrow stripe succeed tracts of uncultivated ground, on which cannot be found ten or twelve persons to the square league,"\* or not near so much as two to the square mile. "The great cities of the Aztecs, and the best cultivated territories, were in the environs of the capital of Mexico, particularly in the fine valley of Tenochtitlan. This alone was a sufficient reason to induce the Spaniards to establish there the center of their new empire: but they loved also to inhabit plains whose climate resembled that of their own country, and where they could cultivate the wheat and fruit trees of Europe. Indigo, cotton, sugar, and coffee, the four great objects of West Indian commerce, were to the conquerors of the sixteenth century of very inferior interest. They sought the precious metals only with avidity, and the search for these metals fixed

\* Humboldt, chap. 4.

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them on the central plain or ridge of the Cordillera.”\* Possessed of the advantage of a temperature not ungenial; the mines of this country, instead of withdrawing the inhabitants from agriculture, are mostly surrounded by the best cultivated lands, where the raising of provisions is encouraged by the markets which the multitudes collected by the mining business furnish. The most populous of the intendancies are those of Mexico, Puebla, and Guanajuato. The first is stated to contain on an average two hundred and fifty-five, the second three hundred and one, and the third five hundred and eighty-six persons to the square league; while the intendancy of Veracruz is supposed to have only thirty-eight. The total population of all New Spain appears, in the year 1803, to have exceeded seven millions, and to have been in a state of rapid encrease. This country indeed may probably contain about half of the inhabitants of all Spanish America.†

## Inhabitants.

About two fifths of the whole population of New Spain consist of unmixed aboriginals, termed Indians, the descendant of those ancient tribes who inhabited the country before the arrival of Europeans. The white inhabitants of unmixed European blood may constitute about one-fifth. The rest of the population is composed of persons of mixed descent, called *castas* by some Spanish writers. The whites are divided into creoles and Spaniards or Europeans. The former are natives of America: the latter, who form hardly a fourteenth of the white population, are natives of Spain.

\* Humboldt, chap. 4. † Idem, chap. 8; also vol. 4, Supplement, p. 322.



The castas, the tribes of mingled extraction, are distinguished by the appellations of mestizos, mulattoes, and zambos. The mestizos or mestees are the mixed descendants of whites and Indians, the mulattoes of whites and negroes, and the zambos of negroes and Indians, or of negroes and Chinese or Malays, imported in the intercourse with the Philippine islands. "The colour of a mestizo is almost a pure white, and his skin is of a particular transparency. The small beard, and small hands and feet, and a certain obliquity of the eyes, are more frequent indications of the mixture of Indian blood than the nature of the hair. If a mestiza, a female of this race, marry a white man, the second generation differs hardly in any thing from the European race. As very few negroes have been introduced into New Spain, the mestizos probably compose seven-eighths of the whole castes. They are generally accounted of a much more mild character than the mulattoes, who are distinguished for the violence of their passions and a singular volubility of tongue. The descendants of negroes and Indian women bear at Mexico, Lima, and even at the Havannah, the strange name of *Chino*, Chinese. On the coast of Caraccas, and, as appears from the laws, even in New Spain, they are called zambos."

"This last denomination is now principally limited to the descendants of a negro and a female mulatto, or a negro and a Chinese female. From these common zambos they distinguish the *zambos prietos*, who descend from a negro and a female zamba. From the mixture of a white

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man with a mulatto comes the cast of *quarterons*. When a female quarteron marries a European or creole, her son bears the name of *quinteron*. A new alliance with a white banishes to such a degree the remains of colour, that the children of a white and female quinteron are white also. The casts of Indian or African blood preserve the odour peculiar to the cutaneous transpiration of those two primitive races. The Peruvian Indians, who, in the middle of the night, distinguish different races by their quick sense of smell, have formed three words to express the odour of the European, the American Indian, and the negro. In a country governed by whites, the families reputed to have the least mixture of negro or Indian blood are also naturally the most honoured. The greater or less degree of whiteness of skin decides the rank which a man occupies in society. A white, who rides bare-footed on horseback, thinks that he belongs to the nobility of the country. Colour establishes even a certain equality among men, who, as is universally the case where civilization is either little advanced, or in a retrograde state, take a particular pleasure in dwelling on the prerogatives of race and origin. When a common man disputes with one of the titled lords, he is frequently heard to say, 'do you think me not so white as yourself?' This may serve to characterize the state and source of the actual aristocracy."\*

Between the whites themselves an invidious distinction, caused by a wrong policy, has long subsisted. The na-

\* Humboldt, chap. 7.

tives of Europe, who are denominated by the natives of America *chapetones* and *gachupines*, are, on account of their unjust privileges, objects of envy to the creoles. "The Spanish laws allow the same rites to all the white inhabitants; but those who are entrusted with the execution of the laws endeavour to destroy an equality which shocks the European pride. The government, suspicious of the creoles, bestows the great places exclusively on the natives of Old Spain. For some years they have disposed at Madrid even of the most trifling employments in the administration of the customs and the revenue of tobacco. At an epoch when every thing tended to a uniform relaxation in the springs of the State, the system of venality made an alarming progress. For the most part it was by no means a suspicious and distrustful policy: it was pecuniary interest alone which bestowed all employments on Europeans. The result has been a jealousy and perpetual hatred between the chapetons and creoles. The most miserable European, without education, thinks himself superior to the whites born in the New Continent. He knows that, protected by his compatriots, and favoured by chances common enough in a country where fortunes are as rapidly acquired as they are lost, he may one day reach places to which the access is almost interdicted to the natives, when even they are distinguished for their talents, knowledge, and moral qualities. The natives prefer the denomination of Americans to that of creoles. Since the peace of Versailles, and, in particular, since the year 1789, we frequently hear proudly declared, 'I am not a Spaniard; I am an *American*!' words which betray the workings of a long resentment,



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In the eye of law every white creole is a Spaniard,"\* but a wrong system of practice has caused the distinction. Between the native whites of Spain and of Mexico scarcely any other difference worth notice is assignable, except that the latter are said to have made lately a greater progress in the knowledge of literature, notwithstanding strong endeavours of the government to prevent them.

The negroes of this country are so few as to be hardly worth notice. "The kingdom of New Spain is, of all the European colonies under the torrid zone, that in which there are the fewest negroes. We may almost say that there are no slaves. We may go through the whole city of Mexico without seeing a black countenance." From exact information procured by the persons employed in the numeration of 1793, it appears that in all New Spain, to the north of Guatemala, "there are not six thousand negroes, and not more than nine or ten thousand slaves, of whom the greatest number belong to the ports of Acapulco and Veracruz, or the warm regions of the coast. Of the seventy-four thousand negroes, annually furnished by Africa to the equinoxial regions of America and Asia, not above a hundred land on the coast of Mexico. The slaves besides, fortunately in so small number, are here, as in all the other Spanish possessions, somewhat more under the protection of the laws than the negroes of the other European colonies. A slave, who by his industry has procured a little money, may compel his master to

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give him his liberty on paying the moderate sum of from sixty-two to eighty-three pounds. Liberty cannot be refused to a negro on the pretext that he has cost the triple of the sum, or that he possesses a particular talent for some lucrative employment. A slave also who has been cruelly used, acquires, on that account, his freedom by the law, if the judge do justice to the cause of the oppressed : but it may be easily conceived, that this beneficent law must be frequently eluded.”\*

The aboriginals of this country, in corporeal qualities and features, agree with the great mass of indigenous population throughout the American continent. “ The Indians of New Spain bear a general resemblance to those who inhabit Canada, Florida, Peru, and Brazil. They have the same swarthy or copper colour, flat and smooth hair, coarse, dark, and so glossy as to seem to be in a constant state of humectation ; small beard ; squat body ; long eye with the corners directed upwards towards the temples ; prominent cheek bones ; thick lips ; and an expression of gentleness in the mouth strongly contrasted with a gloomy and severe look. They have a more swarthy complexion than the inhabitants of the warmest climates in South America. They have also, particularly the tribes of the Aztec and Otomite race, generally more beard. Almost all the Indians in the neighbourhood of the capital wear small mustachios, and this is even a mark of the tributary cast. A great physical advantage is, that they are subject almost

Aboriginals.

\* Humboldt, chap. 7.

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to no deformity. A hunch-backed Indian seems not to be discoverable ; and any who squint, or are lame in arm or leg, are extremely rare. When we examine savage hunters or warriors, we are tempted to believe that they are all well made, merely because those who have any natural deformity either perish from fatigue or are exposed by their parents ; but the Mexican and Peruvian Indians, those of Quito and New Granada, are agriculturists, who can only be compared with the class of European peasantry. We can have no doubt then, that the absence of natural deformities among them is the effect of their mode of life, and of the constitution peculiar to their race. Accustomed to a uniform nourishment of almost entirely a vegetable nature, they would undoubtedly attain a very great longevity, if their constitutions were not weakened by drunkenness. In the temperate regions of Mexico, half up the cordillera, natives, especially women, of a hundred years of age, are by no means uncommon ; and they are found also to retain their muscular strength to the last."\* The strength of those Indians, who are employed as porters in the mines is doubtless extraordinary. In a hot temperature of between seventy and eighty degrees of Fahrenheit, these remain loaded, each with a weight of from two hundred and forty-two to three hundred and seventy-seven pounds, six hours every day, during which they ascend and descend several thousands of steps, in pits of such acclivity, that the angle of the inclined plain is only of forty-five degrees, the ascent of which is to Europeans, without any sort of burden, oppressively fatiguing.†

\* Humboldt, chap. 6.

† Humboldt, chap. 11.



The languages of the aboriginals are various, and many of them radically different one from another. The *Maya* tongue, spoken in the northern parts of Yucatan, is remarkable for its extremely guttural pronunciation. The Aztec, which is of all the most extensively diffused, and doubtless the most cultivated, is not very smooth or sonorous, but copious and expressive. It is destitute of the sounds of the letters B, D, F, G, and R. It was read from right to left, and from bottom to top.\* It is remarkable for its final syllables, expressive of respect, occasionally added, and for containing many words inconveniently polysyllabic. Any word, by the addition of *zin* or *azin* at the end, becomes an expression of veneration in the mouth of an inferior. Of the reverential affixes, and of the length of applications, the term *notlazomahuiztespixcatatzin*, may serve as an instance, which signifies *venerable priest whom I cherish as my father*. Many Indian families are found to bear Spanish names, the names of those masters among whom the aboriginals were formerly distributed; but they seem to differ little in dress from their ancestors, since even those who boast themselves of noble blood go generally bare-footed, and covered with a Mexican tunic of a coarse texture and of a dark brown hue. Concerning the mental qualities and natural disposition of a people so miserably degraded by Spanish tyranny very little can be known. Considering "the Mexican Indian in his actual state, we perceive in him neither that mobility of sensation, gesture, or feature, nor that activity of mind, for which several nations of the

\* Humboldt's Researches, vol. 2. p. 150.

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equinoxial regions of Africa are so advantageously distinguished. There cannot exist a more marked contrast than that which is between the impetuous vivacity of the Congoeze negro and the apparent phlegm of the Indian. The latter is grave, melancholic, and silent, so long as he is not under the influence of intoxicating liquors. This gravity is particularly remarkable in the Indian children, who, at the age of four or five years, display much more intelligence and maturity than white children. The Mexican loves to throw a mysterious air over the most indifferent actions. The most violent passions are never painted in his features; and there is something frightful in seeing him pass all at once from absolute repose to a state of violent and untrained agitation. The music and dancing of this people partake of this want of gaiety by which they are characterized. Their songs are terrific and melancholic. The woman shew more vivacity; but they share the misfortunes of that servitude to which their sex is condemned among men whose civilization is in its infancy."

As the Mexican Indians are almost all of the class of peasantry, or of a similarly low condition, to judge of their aptitude for the arts which embellish life is not very easy. No men of any race appear more destitute of imagination. "When an Indian attains a certain degree of civilization, he displays a great facility of apprehension, a judicious mind, a natural logic, and a particular disposition to subtilize, or seize the finest differences in the comparison of objects. He reasons coolly and orderly, but he never manifests that versatility of imagination, that glow of sentiment, and that

creative and animating art, which characterize the nations of the south of Europe, and several tribes of African negroes." To rise however to any considerable degree in the scale of society must be the lot of extremely few. "How can any great change take place among them, when they are kept insulated in villages, in which the whites dare not settle; when the difference of language places an almost insurmountable barrier between them and the Europeans; when they are oppressed by magistrates chosen from political considerations from their own number; and, in short, when they can only expect moral and civil improvement from their priest, a man who talks to them of mysteries, dogmas, and ceremonies, of the end of which they are ignorant?"

"Accustomed to a long slavery, the natives of Mexico patiently suffer the vexations to which they are frequently exposed from the whites. They oppose to them only a cunning, veiled under the most deceitful appearances of apathy and stupidity. As the Indian can very rarely revenge himself on the Spaniards, he delights in making a common cause with them for the oppression of his own compatriots. Harassed for ages, and compelled to a blind obedience, he wishes to tyrannize in his turn. Oppression every where produces the same effects. It every where corrupts the morals. "Among the vices of a degraded race that of drunkenness may be well expected. "This is most common among those Indians who inhabit the valley of Mexico and the environs of Puebla and Tlascala, wherever the agave is cultivated on a great scale. The police in the



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city of Mexico sends round tumbrils to collect such drunkards as may be found stretched in the streets. These are carried to the principal guard-house. In the morning iron rings are put round their ancles, and they are obliged to clean the streets during three days. They are dismissed on the fourth ; but many of them are apt to be found again in the course of the week." Little energy can have place among people so debased. When any appears, it degenerates into harshness. This is displayed chiefly "by the inhabitants of Tlascala. Amid their present degradation, the descendants of those republicans are still to be distinguished by a certain haughtiness of character, inspired by the memory of the ancient grandeur of their state." In their degenerate condition the "Mexicans have still preserved a particular relish for painting, and for the art of carving in wood or stone. We are astonished at what they are able to execute with a bad knife on the hardest wood. In painting they display great aptitude in the arts of imitation, and much greater still for the purely mechanical arts. This cannot fail of becoming some day very valuable, when the manufactures shall take their flight to a country where a regenerating government remains yet to be created."\* They have also preserved an extraordinary taste for flowers, with a fresh collection of which their traders ornament their shops, or places of sale, every day.

The account given above relates only to the aboriginals subject to the Spanish Government. Concerning the few,

\* Chap. 6.

who still retain their independence in separated tracts, nothing further is known than that they are savages like the wild tribes of North America, except a particular clan on the coast of Honduras, denominated Musquitoes. This little nation, which cannot muster more than fifteen hundred, or at most two thousand men able to bear arms, has an accidental tincture of negro blood, from the wreck of a ship carrying African slaves, of whom several females escaped to land. Detesting the Spaniards, from whose settlements they are separated by a ridge of lofty mountains, a part of the Andes, they have long maintained an alliance with the English, and have among them a tradition, that the people with *grey eyes* are to be their protectors from slavery. From this connexion, they have acquired a comparatively considerable degree of civilization ; though both sexes in general wear no other clothing than a small kind of wrapper, which reaches from the lower part of the waist to the middle of the thigh : but, on extraordinary occasions, their chiefs appear clothed in British regimentals, and bear titles of military commissions. Their government is a monarchy absolute and strictly hereditary. By their superior state of polity they keep under tribute, which is paid annually in cattle, two contiguous tribes, the Poyers and Towcas, each more numerous than themselves, and accounted also braver. They appear to possess a state of happiness superior to that of most aboriginal Mexicans, and enjoy a plenty of food : but, from the nature of their coast, which admits no vessels of any considerable size, nor indeed even small craft without danger, they have very little commerce.\* The

\* Henderson, p. 177—191.

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English settlement in Yucatan has been sometimes annoyed by predatory bands of savages, who issued from unknown recesses in the forests. These made their appearance in a state of total nudity, and with a most ferocious disposition. They were armed with bows of a curious workmanship, the arrows of which were supposed to be poisoned. \*

English Settlement.

The only European settlement, except those of the Spaniards, which is retained in the Mexican regions, is that of the English, in the bay of Honduras, on the coast of Yucatan, formed solely for the cutting and exportation of mahogany and logwood. This settlement is small, computed to contain, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, only about two hundred white people, five hundred of a mixed breed and free negroes, and three thousand negro slaves. The last are considered as so attached to their masters, from a humane treatment, as truly politic as it is uncommon, that they are all entrusted with the use of arms, and are excellent marksmen. On this depends, in no small part, the safety of the colony, which is so parted from the Spanish posts by swamps and impenetrable woods, as to be exposed to an attack only from the sea. By a shameful concession of the British cabinet, in a treaty concluded in 1763, the fortifications were demolished, and the colonists put under the protection of the King of Spain, who pledged his faith that, in case of war, they should be allowed six months, after notice, for the removal of their persons and effects. This promise was as shamefully violated in 1779, when, without

\* Henderson, p. 18.



the least previous notice, their properties were seized, and their persons transported to Cuba, imprisoned, and treated otherwise with cruelty. Restored to their possessions in 1784, by a new convention, they took more effectual measures for defence, insomuch that they repelled a formidable invading force in 1798. Their dwellings are seated on the banks of rivers, down which the timber is floated to the place of embarkation. The chief of these rivers is the Balize, which is navigable through a space of two hundred miles, for all the purposes required by the settlers. At its mouth stands the town of Balize, the only regular establishment, quite open to the sea, and consisting of about two hundred houses of all descriptions. These are built entirely of wood, generally raised eight or ten feet from the ground on pillars of mahogany, mostly covered with shingles, but some still thatched with the leaves of the palmetto.\*.

\* Henderson.



## CHAPTER II.

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# NEW MEXICO.

*Site—Division—Coast—Face—Waters—Air—Products—  
Antiquities—Inhabitants—Towns.*

A REGION of great, but as yet undefined extent, is here conceived to occupy all that vast space which lies between Louisiana, the Californian gulf, the Pacific ocean, Northwestern America, and Old Mexico or New Spain. From the last we consider it as parted only by an imaginary line drawn from the northwestern angle of the gulf of Mexico to the most southern part of the gulf of California. Except where the latter gulf and the ocean bound it, its limits are elsewhere quite uncertain. On the side of northwestern America we cannot even conjecture where the wilds of the two regions mutually terminate. On the side of Louisiana the position of the bounding line depends on future events. The Spaniards, to whom New Mexico has hitherto belonged, consider this country as extending as far to the east as the river Mermentas or Mexicana, which flows into the

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Site.



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Division.

gulf of Mexico to the east of the river Sabina; while the anglo-Americans, in possession of Louisiana, would contract the Spanish dominion within the great river called Rio Bravo del Norte, willing to extend their own settlements so far westward as that stream. Taken in the sense noted above, New Mexico contains great part of what are called the intendancies of San Luis de Potosi and Durango or New Biscay, together with those of New Mexico properly so called, New California, or, as it was denominated by the famous Drake, New Albion, and Sonora, including Cinaloa. These intendancies or governments, subordinate to the viceroyalty of Old Mexico, are considered as subdivided into a number of inferior provinces or territories, the limits of which are not permanently settled and a catalogue of whose names seems hardly worth attention.

Coast.

The coasts of this country have not been well explored: at least no accurate accounts of them have been received. That which is washed by the gulf of California doubtless presents many receptacles for shipping, but few of them are noticed or named, and none described. That which is washed by the Pacific ocean has several ports which seem to be good. One, that of San Francisco, has been noted as excellent. In its coast on the side of the gulf of Mexico, the extent of which coast is as uncertain as the eastern limit of this region, no harbour has been found, except for small vessels which can swim in shallow water. From the coasts the land rises north-eastward and north-westward to the interior country, the middle parts of which consist of mountainous tracts and high table-ground. This table-ground.

Face.

is a continuation of that of Old Mexico, which advances, though with inferior height, northward through this region, yet rising higher in approaching the north, and attaining its greatest elevation in the mountains of Sierra Verde, about the fortieth degree of latitude, the ridges of which extend still further toward the north. To the east and west of the elevated interior country the lands are generally low, but much more on the eastern side, where are plains of vast extent. Great part of these plains are what are called Savannahs, destitute of trees, but covered with various grasses. Of such consists all the eastern part of the country next Louisiana, a vast extent from north to south, which terminates southward in impassible marshes. Although the country along the Californian gulf is low, it is diversified with hills, which increase in number and elevation as they recede from the coast. New Albion presents a different face, traversed from north to south, at no great distance from its shores, by a continuation of that vast ridge of mountains which extends along the coast of North-western America. The scenery throughout the vast region of New Mexico is almost as wild, as the country is uninhabited except in scattered spots. As the land is generally fertile, and the sky serene, the prospect is mostly pleasing, but some tracts are arid, and by nature barren. Thus a desert, destitute of water, extends about ninety miles between the intendancies of Durango and New Mexico properly so called, and thus also the northern part of Sonora is sandy and dry.\*

\* Humboldt's New Spain, vol. 2, chap. 8.—Vancouver's Voyage, vol. 4, chap. 8, &c.

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## Waters.

Concerning the lakes and rivers of this as yet imperfectly explored region we have little to say. Of the former we have no certain account. Two have been noticed in the western parts, a salt lake about the thirty-ninth degree of latitude, the western limits of which are unknown, and the lake of Timpanogos, about the forty-first degree, of great but unascertained extent. The chief of the rivers is that which is named by the Spaniards Rio Bravo, Rio Grandedel Norte, the great river of the North, which, from its source in the Sierra Verde, runs above a thousand miles to its influx into the gulf of Mexico, with a very muddy stream, a stream, which, from the melting of the snow, begins to swell in April, attains its greatest height in the beginning of May, and sinks again toward the end of June. The Rio Colorado, springing from the same chain of mountains, flows south-westward above six hundred miles to the northern angle of the Californian gulf. Another Rio Colorado, distinguished by the epithet of *de Texas*, is one of the many streams which flow southward into the gulf of Mexico. The Rio Gila has a westerly course to the angle of the Californian gulf into which the Colorado makes its influx.

A scantiness of streams of water and of rain seems the chief inconvenience of this otherwise in general very fine country. The season of rains appears to be from December to March. Little falls in the other months, particularly in the autumnal, in which a dry season seems mostly to prevail. Heavy dews supply in some degree the deficiency of rain, and in New Albion at least a haze, or kind of fog, which very frequently obscures the sky, promotes by its



moisture vegetation. The temperature must vary with the circumstances of the land, particularly its height above the ocean's level. In the low lands of New Albion the weather is so mild that the inhabitants enjoy a perpetual spring, at least as far as the thirty-sixth degree of latitude; while in the elevated table-grounds of the province of New Mexico properly so called, the winter is so severe, that the Rio del Norte, at the thirty-seventh degree, is sometimes, for a succession of years, frozen so hard as to admit the passage over it of horses and carriages. Even in the low lands in the eastern parts, although the heat is violent in summer, the cold of winter is rendered severe by sharp winds from the north. The sky throughout the whole is in general serene, little troubled by storms or violent changes of weather, and the air is accounted uncommonly salubrious to the human constitution.\*

Among the indigenous vegetables of this country, spontaneously produced, are oak, cherrytree, and many other species of timber, gooseberries, raspberries, currants, and various other berries, roses, wild peas, and wild vines, which bear a sour kind of grape. The grain, fruits, and roots of Europe, so far as they have been imported and tried, thrive excellently in its fertile soil. Thus in New Albion, wheat sown without manure, and cultivated in a very clumsy manner, yields thirty, or at least twenty-five fold.† European quadrupeds have also been introduced and thrive well, par-

Products.

\* Humboldt, book 3, chap. 8.—Vancouver's Voyage, in various places.

† Vancouver, book 3, chap. 1.

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ticularly horses. Among the indigenous animals is a kind of wild goat, or chamois on the mountains, and also a gigantic and beautiful stag, of a brown colour, smooth, and destitute of spots, the branches of whose horns are near four feet and a half in length. These, which are very numerous in the plains, are frequently taken by the Spanish colonists on horseback with nooses, or are shot by the natives, who approach them by the stratagem of putting stags' heads over their own, and concealing their bodies in brushwood or long herbage.\* In products of the fossil kind this country, so far as trials have been made, may be accounted rich. Gold is found in great quantities in the province of Sonora, particularly in the hilly tract named Pimeria-alta, and might be found in still greater, if searchers were not deterred by the incursions of warlike savages. This metal is obtained by washing away sand or earth in the ravines and alluvious ground. Pieces of pure gold called *pepitas* have been thus procured of the weight of from five to six pounds.†

## Antiquities.

Of the history of this country we have no certain information previously to the arrival of the Spaniards, who began to plant some small colonies in it soon after their conquest of Old Mexico; but that some parts of it were once inhabited by a people advanced above savage life to some degree of civilization, monuments still extant shew. The chief of these monuments is found in a vast and beautiful plain, which lies one league from the southern bank of

\* Humboldt, book 3, chap. 8.

† Idem, book 4, chap. 11.

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the Rio Gila, where stand the ruins of an ancient city, supposed to have been inhabited by the Aztecs in their progress toward the south. In the middle of these ruins, which occupy more than a square league, is seen the remnant of an edifice called *casa grande*, four hundred and forty-five feet long, two hundred and seventy-six broad, with walls almost four feet thick, built of great blocks of clay, previously rammed into cases, and thus rendered hard and durable. This ancient structure, the four sides of which face exactly the four cardinal points, is observed to have had three stories, a terrace, and stairs outside, probably of wood, as is at present the fashion of some independent tribes of natives of this country, and three apartments, each above twenty-seven feet long, almost eleven broad, and near twelve in height. The plain around is in great part covered with broken pitchers and pots of earthenware, prettily painted in white, red, and blue, intermixed with pieces of obsidian, used in cutting instruments.\* Whether art had any share in the production of a very curious object, near the river Monterrey in New Albion, seems a little doubtful. Here the side of a hill or mountain is so excavated as to exhibit the appearance of a vast and sumptuous building in a state of decay, the roof of which is the top of the hill, supported by columns of great magnitude, elegantly formed, and rising perpendicularly with the most minute mathematical exactness.†

The inhabitants of this country, as yet extremely few in proportion to its vast extent, consist mostly of Spanish co-

Inhabitants.

\* Humboldt, book 3, chap. 8.      † Vancouver, book 6, chap. 2.



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lonists and indigenous tribes. The former dwell in towns and scattered settlements at great distances asunder. Of the settlements some are *presidios*, which are only garrisons with a few soldiers in each, for defence against the hostilities of the independent natives. Others are called missions, in each of which a few monks are stationed for the purpose of endeavouring to convert and civilize the wild tribes in their neighbourhood. Their success appears to have been hitherto only partial and slow. The colonists who are most exposed to the attacks of the savages are said, from their habits of vigilance and activity, to be superior in the energies both of body and mind to all other people of Spanish descent in the American regions. The indigenous people consist of various tribes, some agricultural and pacific, some pastoral, and some venatic and quite savage. [The indigenous who inhabit the plains to the south of the Rio Gila, and have had no intercourse with the Spanish colonists, were found clothed and considerably civilized, peaceable, collected in villages, and cultivating the soil with maize, cotton, and gourds.] Also to the north of the Gila, between it and the Colorado, dwell settled people called Moqui Indians, among whom was found a town with regular streets parallel to one another, two great squares, and houses of several stories, built in the manner of the *casas grandes*, one of which I have mentioned under the head of antiquities, several tribes of the indigenous, particularly of the people called Apaches, dwell in fixed habitations, in a state of peace with the colonists. The pastoral and venatic tribes are not clearly distinguished. They are both erratic, denominated by the Spaniards *Indios bravos*, and implacable

(people)

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enemies to the Spanish race. They inhabit chiefly the extensive wilds of the north and east. The tribes of the Cumanches are uncommonly formidable. These have learned to tame the horses of Spanish breed, which run wild in the Savannahs, and are said to be exceeded by no people whatsoever in the agility of horsemanship. They lodge in tents of buffaloes' hides, which are carried from place to place on the backs of great dogs, by which they are accompanied.\* The savages in the southern parts of New Albion are so excessively stupid and lazy, that, not without the utmost difficulty, have the monks, established in the several missions, been able to induce a few to adopt a life of industry and civilization.

We find no towns of great magnitude in New Mexico, since the country is as yet very thinly colonized. The most populous noted in a survey of it is Culiacan in Sonora, which is estimated to contain almost eleven thousand souls. The numbers in the other towns are rated at from three or four to near ten thousand. To Santa Fe, the capital of the province properly called New Mexico, not more than three thousand six hundred persons are attributed. In New Albion we find only villages, inhabited by such indigenous people as the missionaries have been able to persuade to dwell thus together under their inspection, and to cultivate the soil. Far the greatest of these, when an account was procured of them, contained about thirteen hundred persons of all ages, under the name of Santaclara.

TOWNS.

\* Humboldt, book 2, chap. 6, book 3, chap. 8.

## CALIFORNIA,

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A PENINSULA, stretching southeastward from the main land of New Mexico, between the Pacific ocean and the Californian gulf, or Vermillion sea, displays on both its coasts, more especially the eastern, mostly high and rocky shores bordered with many islands, and broken by many bays, some of them spacious, which afford in various degrees accommodation for ships. It is divided longitudinally throughout by a chain of mountains, the most elevated of which, called Cerro de la Giganta, rises to the height of near five thousand feet above the surface of the ocean. This and some other mountains appear to have had a volcanic origin. Not only these mountains, but the plains also at each side, more especially the western, present a naked and dreary prospect, arid, bare, and barren, seldom refreshed with rain, and little moistened by springs or streams of water. Generally where springs are found the surface of the earth consists of sand or barren rock, which receives no benefit from irrigation: but in spots, comparatively few, where springs and vegetative soil concur, the fertility is prodigious. The beauties of this country are displayed by its atmosphere, not by its land. "The sky is constantly serene, and of a deep blue, and without a cloud; and should any clouds appear for a moment at the setting of the sun, they display the most beautiful shades



of violet, purple and green. All those who have ever been in California preserved the recollection of the extraordinary beauty of this phenomenon, which depends on a particular state of the vesicular vapour, and the purity of the air in these climates."\*

In so arid a region the vegetable products must be expected to be scanty. The land is almost destitute of trees, yet amid the sand and stones at the foot of the mountains some species of the cactus rise to extraordinary heights. The vine, where cultivated, yields an excellent grape, the wine of which resembles that of the Canary islands. We can easily conceive from the climate of California what vegetables it might yield where soil and water are procured, but the chief object of culture appears to be maize. Among the indigenous quadrupeds is a wild animal on the mountains which resembles the *mouflon* of Sardinia, having horns "curved on themselves in a spiral form," and leaping, like the ibex, with the head downward. The gulf of California along its coast is more productive than the land, yielding pearls of a very beautiful water and large size, but often of an irregular shape, disagreeable to the eye. They abound much more in the southern than in the northern parts of the gulf, particularly in the bay of Cerralvo, and around the islands of Santa Cruz and San Jose. This branch of industry however has been of late years so neglected, that it is considered as almost or altogether abandoned.

Humboldt, book 3, chap. 8.

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California was discovered in 1534, by Hernando de Grijalva, in the employment of Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico, who visited in person the country in the following year, and afterwards commissioned, for the completion of the survey, Francisco de Ulloa, who ascertained this region to be a peninsula. In 1683, the Jesuits began to establish missions for the conversion of the natives, and "displayed there that commercial industry, and that activity, to which they are indebted for so many successes, and which have exposed them to so many calumnies in both Indies." In the middle of the eighteenth century their affairs were prosperous. They had in very few years built sixteen villages in the interior of the peninsula, and their settlements were become considerable. Since their expulsion in 1767, the Spanish government has confided California to the Dominican monks of the city of Mexico, under whom the state of affairs seems much altered for the worse.

California is so thinly peopled as to be almost a desert. Its length is about seven hundred miles. Its unascertained breadth may be on an average nearly one hundred. Its area may thus contain near sixty millions of English acres, or may be nearly three times as great as that of Ireland. The number of people in all this extent of territory seems not to exceed nine thousand. The Spaniards are few, consisting only of some soldiers and monks. The indigenous people, who are so far reclaimed from a savage life as to dwell in fixed habitations and cultivate the soil, are reckoned only at between four and five thousand. Of those who still remain savage the number is said scarcely to amount to

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four thousand. The country was formerly far less thinly inhabited, but a great depopulation, within thirty or forty years past, has been caused by the small pox, and perhaps by political defects, of which we are not informed. No towns can have place where people are so few. The chief mission or village is that of Loreto. Those indigenous Californians, who still remain in a savage state, are described as among the very lowest in the scale of civilization, wandering about in a state of absolute nudity in search of precarious food, exposed without the shelter of a roof to all the vicissitudes of the atmosphere, and destitute of other religion than the dread of invisible malignant beings, whose malice they deprecate. They are rather of a small and feeble frame, with little vigour of spirit, and of a very dark complexion, approaching to black. They entertain such a contempt of clothing, that a man in clothes appears more ridiculous to them than a monkey with garments to the common people of Europe.\*

\* Humboldt, book 3, chap. 8.—Account of California by Venegas, &c.





## CHAPTER III.

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### NORTHWESTERN AMERICA.

*Site—Coast—Face—Waters—Temperature—Vegetables—Animals—Fossils—History—Commerce—Inhabitants—Eskeemoes—Occidentals—Person—Habits—Language—Houses—Life—Manners—Interior Aborigines—Persons—Habits—Language—Habitations—Food—Religion—Government—Tribes—Depopulation—Life—Manners—Customs—Arts.*

### NORTHWESTERN AMERICA,

HERE considered, for geographical convenience, as that immense continuous portion of the northern peninsula of the new continent which remains as yet uncolonized by Europeans, and free from the dominion of any civilized nation, consists of the whole extent of territory which lies between the gulf or sea of Hudson, the Pacific ocean, the Arctic ocean or Icy sea, and the boundaries of Canada and New Mexico. These boundaries indeed are not as yet permanently settled, nor can we at present form a rational conjecture how soon such alterations shall have been made, by the planting of colonies, as may render a new geographical

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## Coast.

account of this vast region necessary. The eastern coast of this immense tract, except along the seas of Hudson and Davis, where it is in general rocky and steep, though affording many receptacles for shipping, is quite unknown. The same is the case with the whole of the northern. The western, parted from Tartary by Beering's strait, is bordered in an extraordinary manner by innumerable islands, is indented by numerous inlets, which form harbours various in magnitude and quality, and consists in great proportion of high table-ground, which constitutes part of the base of an immense chain of mountains. Of the various projections of the land that which runs farthest into the Pacific is the peninsula of Alaska. Of the multitude of inlets, that which penetrates nearest to the great inland waters is Lynn channel, near the latitude of fifty-nine, which advances within three hundred and seventy English miles of the great Athabaska or Slave lake, from which, however, it is separated by a vast chain of mountains. Of the masses of rock, various in size and figure, which, along this extensive coast, repel or break the waves of the ocean, some display to mariners a romantic appearance. Of these, one, resembling a ship under sail, stands insulated near the middle of a channel, beyond the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, above two hundred and fifty feet in perpendicular height.\*

## Face.

This immense region, so far as information concerning it has been collected, consists in general of wide-spread plains,

\* Vancouver's Voyage round the World, 8vo. London, 1801, vol. 4, p. 160.—For the coast in general, see various parts of the 4th, 5th and 6th volumes; also Cooke's 3d Voyage, Perouse, &c.



which gradually rise to a great elevation in the interior, and are traversed in the western parts by a prodigious chain of mountains, and elsewhere, more especially, in the southern parts, by some ridges of inferior magnitude. The western chain, apparently connected with the Andes of South America, may perhaps be justly denominated the Andes of the North, though by travellers it has been named the Shining and the Stony mountains, from the appearances displayed by it in several places. In its progress northward, this vast ridge elevates its peaks to a stupendous height, and takes a north-westerly direction, parallel to the coast of the Pacific, from which ocean its range of summits, cased with perpetual ice and snow, is visible to mariners, through a far extended course of navigation, and to which some lateral chains, and branches extending from the main ridge, make, in several places, a near approach. It presents to the eye a grand and magnificent prospect, but cold and savage, of snow, glaciers, and naked rocks, rugged, precipitous, and stupendously high. Between the river Columbia and Cook's inlet it attains its greatest elevation and greatest breadth, a breadth of from about two hundred and sixty to between three and four hundred miles, and is bordered along the eastern skirts by a narrow and uneven strip of quite marshy or boggy ground. Pursuing still a north-westerly course, but, from Cook's inlet, with apparently diminished size, it terminates at length, about the seventieth degree of latitude in the Arctic ocean.\*

\* Mackenzie's Travels, 4to. London, 1801, p. 401—402.—Vancouver, vol. 6, p. 27, 411, &c. &c.

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A ridge of much inferior height, but of prodigious length, extends from Labrador, between the waters of Hudson's gulf and those of the Saint Lawrence river, in a nearly south-westerly course, to the sources of the river Utawas. Thence it turns north-westward to the longitude of eighty-nine degrees and the latitude of fifty, where it forks, and sends a branch to the south-west, while the main ridge pursues a north-westerly direction, to the north of lake Winnipig, whence it winds westward between the rivers Beaver and Saskatshawin, till it strikes a long ridge which stretches north eastward. The latter, parting the waters which fall into Hudson's gulf from those which flow to the Arctic ocean, takes a direction almost to the north beyond the latitude of fifty-seven, and throws a branch to the west, which terminates at Mackenzie's river.

That part of this vast region, which lies between the Andes of the North and the Pacific ocean, is mostly mountainous and rugged. To the east of this chain vast plains expand, widening as they advance toward the east and south. The northern parts which stretch eastward from these mountains, dreary, cold, and inhospitable, destitute of trees, except some dwarfish kinds, abounding in rocks and water, and shelving to the Icy sea, bear a strong resemblance to the Asiatic region of Siberia. Even farther toward the south the *Savannahs*, or grassy plains, are considerably like the Tartarian *Steppes*, or desarts of Northern Asia; while the Northern Andes, in respect of position, may bear some similitude to the Uralian chain. In the southern parts the wild scenery, the only kind which can have place

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in regions void of culture, has been found highly beautiful. A celebrated traveller enjoyed in September "a most extensive romantic, and ravishing prospect;" and again he thus speaks of what he saw in May.\* "This magnificent theatre of nature has all the decorations which the trees and animals of the country can afford it. Groves of poplars in every shape vary the scene, and their intervals are enlivened with vast herds of elks and buffaloes; the former choosing the steeps and uplands; the latter the plains. The whole country displayed an exuberant verdure. The trees which bear a blossom were advancing fast to that delightful appearance; and the velvet rind of their branches, reflecting the oblique rays of a rising or setting sun, added a splendid gaiety to the scene which no expressions of mine are qualified to describe."

Beside the vast lakes and rivers of the immense northern peninsula of America already noted in the general view, many of no inconsiderable magnitude belong to this north-western region, of which however very few are more than very partially known to Europeans. To attempt to describe them would as yet be premature. Such is their number and communication, that canoes can be navigated in all directions, through thousands of miles, except short interruptions at places called *portages*, where, on account of cataracts, or other impediments, the canoe and its cargo must be carried from one navigable part of the channel to

Waters.

\* Mackenzie, p. 155.—See also Lewis and Clarke's Travels, 4to. London, 1814, p. 40, 52, 390, 556, &c.



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another, or from one river to another. Among the streams which run eastward is the Saskatchewan, which, arising from the northern Andes, falls into the great lake of Winnipeg, whence it issues, under the name of Nelson river, and disembogues into the gulf of Labrador, after a course of about a thousand miles. Among those which flow northward is the Unjiga or Peace river, which, originating from a western lateral chain of these Andes, and making its way through a gap in the main ridge, discharges its waters into the vast bason absurdly called the Slave lake, from the western angle of which it makes its egress, and pursues its course, a course in all of about seventeen hundred miles, to the arctic ocean, under the denomination of Mackenzie's river. Among those which run to the Pacific ocean is the Columbia, called also the Oregon and Tatoutche-Tessi, which is said by late travellers\* to be navigable by large sloops through a hundred and eighty miles above its mouth, and by ships of three hundred tons through a length of a hundred and twenty-five miles. That which has been denominated Cook's river has been found by Vancouver to be only an inlet of the Pacific, above two hundred miles in length.

Temperature.

Exposed to the northerly and northwesterly winds, which blow with inconceivable keenness from the ice of the Arctic ocean, all the northern parts of this immense region, which lie to the east of the Northern Andes, sustain the utmost rigours of intense cold, in the same manner as Siberia.

\* Lewis and Clarke's Travels, 8vo. London, 1809, p. 19.

The earth continues frozen throughout the whole year, except that in the heats of summer it is thawed to the depth of from two to four feet. The season of these heats, which are indeed intense, is only of about four or five weeks' duration; but even then the changes from heat to cold are great and sudden.\* To the south of the long ridge, which extends from Labrador southward and westward, where warm winds from the gulf of Mexico operate on that part of the atmosphere, the temperature is milder, and is found warmer in proportion to the advance of the country southward. In the long tract contained between the Northern Andes and the Pacific ocean the air is vastly less cold than in the parts between the same parallels to the east of these mountains.† This appears to be the effect of oceanic winds, from whose influence the tracts lying eastward of the Northern Andes are screened by this huge barrier; while by the same, in its north-westerly direction, the piercing winds from the Icy sea, may be, in great measure, confined to the more eastern regions.

The indigenous vegetables, spontaneously produced, in this immense uncultivated portion of the globe, are in great variety, varied with the temperature of the air, the nature of the soil, the aspect of the ground, and other circumstances; but the species as yet distinguished by the researches of Europeans are comparatively very few. Toward the icy shores of the north vegetation gradually languishes, ending

Vegetables.

\* Volney's View of the United States of America, 8vo. London, 1814, p. 155—157.

† Cook's Third Voyage, book 4, chap. 2.

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in stunted and straggling pines, junipers, and moss, and leaving little beside naked rocks and water to the view of the traveller. Southward the herbage gradually augments, and the trees encrease in size, variety, and number, till at length the forests become dense and extensive. This improvement of the vegetation, in a progress to the south, has place far earlier, or far nearer the north, on the coast of the Pacific ocean than on the eastern side of the Northern Andes, from the superior warmth of the air on that coast. Among the trees of the forest are several species of the pine, many of which grow to such magnitude as to be twenty or thirty feet in girth, and of a height proportionate, sometimes of above two hundred feet. The cedar also, often of still larger dimensions, covers some tracts of considerable extent. The alder forms beautiful woods in some places, with a trunk seven or eight or more feet in circumference, and forty in height between the ground and lowest branches. The inner rind of some species, particularly that which is called the hemlock tree, is used as food, on occasions of scarcity, by the savages. Wild berries of various kinds are produced in abundance, in places adapted severally to their growth. Among these are gooseberries, currants, cherries, raspberries, cranberries, and strawberries. The rosebush also flourishes copiously in many tracts. Among the wild plants are flax, the parsnip, the carrot, the liquorice, wild rye, and that which is termed by botanists *zizania aquatica*, and by travellers wild rice. This appears to be a species of grass, bearing farinaceous seeds which resemble rice. Growing in vast quantities in shallow streams of water, in tracts where the cold is too severe for the pro-



duction of European corn, this plant, which now serves to feed savages and wild fowl, may become in future times an object of human culture.

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All the quadrupeds of this immense region, so far as we are informed, appear to be as yet indigenous, except the horse, which has been lately introduced into the southern parts by the Indians, who steal considerable numbers from the Spanish colonists of New Mexico. Among the indigenous animals are two species of the *Vaccine* tribe, the bison and the musk ox, which differ greatly in size, but are humped both at the shoulders, are clothed, at the roots of their long hair, with fine wool fit to be manufactured into cloth, and smell both of musk, but the latter sort more strongly, insomuch that its heart is on this account not edible. The bison, termed also the buffalo and the American ox, grows to such a size as to weigh from sixteen hundred to two thousand four hundred pounds. From its long locks of reddish hair, depending from the head and shoulders, the bull displays a tremendous aspect, but is extremely timid, unless it be wounded, when it becomes dangerously fierce. These animals migrate in vast herds from north to south, and from the highlands to the lowlands, and conversely, according to the seasons, between the latitudes of Hudson's gulf and those of the northern parts of New Mexico. These and several species of the deer are so numerous in the rich lands toward the south, that the country has "the appearance, in some places of a stall-yard, from the state of the ground, and the quantity of dung which is

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scattered over it.”\* The musk ox is less tall than a deer, but larger in the body. The horns are so disproportionately large, that a pair sometimes weighs sixty pounds, and the legs are little more than a foot in length; yet the animal is nimble, and climbs rocks like a goat. The hair of the female is black, but that of the male is of a dusky red, extremely fine, and so long as to trail on the ground. It migrates in herds of twenty or thirty, nearly as far southward as the bison, and much farther northward, even beyond the latitude of seventy-two degrees.†

Of the deer are several species. The reindeer is seen moving in columns of eight or ten thousand each, in the vicinity of Hudson's gulf. The stag, near five feet high, and eight in length, inhabits more southern territories, separated from those of the former sort almost by a line, instinctively settled, as if by mutual compact. The moosedeer, of which the elk seems to be a species, inhabits the latitudes of the vast Canadian lakes, and thence so far southward as the fortieth degree. The weight of the largest has been found to be twelve hundred pounds, and the height seventeen hands. With hair of a hoary brown colour, a huge head, short neck, and long ears, it shews a rather deformed and stupid aspect. Less than three feet measures the distance between the tips of the horns of this animal, which is certainly not the same species with that which anciently existed in Ireland, where horns of vast size are found. It is inoffensive, except in the season of amorous feelings, or when it is

\* Mackenzie, p. 104.—See also Lewis and Clarke, 4to. p. 652.

† Pennant's Arctic Zoology, vol. 1, page 8—12.

wounded. The skin is manufactured into excellent buff. The flesh is remarkably agreeable and nutritious, particularly the tongue, but chiefly the nose, which is perfectly marrow.\* Several smaller species of deer, like those of Europe, roam in numerous herds through the vast forests and savannahs of the middle and southern parts, and in like manner the elk.

Among the various other kinds of quadrupeds in this vast region are several species of the bear, white, red, black, and grey, the beaver, the porcupine, the wolf, the fox of several sorts and colours, the ground-dog, which burrows in the earth, the wolvereen, which seems to be a species of carnivorous bear, and several varieties of the cat, the largest of which is by some called the panther, and has been found six feet in the length of its body. The beaver inhabits from the sixtieth to the thirtieth degree of latitude, but much more toward the former. This amphibious animal, so much the object of pursuit on account of its valuable fur, is known to live in societies of two or three hundred together, to work in common like the ant or bee, and to form assemblages of commodious apartments on lakes and rivers, where it lodges, and stores its food, the branches and shoots of trees, for the winter. The beaver, which weighs from forty to sixty pounds, is inferior in size to the black sea-otter, the weight of whose body is seventy or eighty. The fur of this quadruped, which inhabits the coast of the Pacific ocean, between the latitudes of forty-nine and sixty, is in such esti-

\* Pennant, vol. 1, p. 18—31.



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mation, that the skin has sold in China at the price of from fourteen to twenty-five pounds.

Among the numerous tribes of the feathered race is the turkey, indigenous only in the new continent, whence it has been imported into the old. This bird, which, in its wild state, grows to the weight of thirty, sometimes even forty pounds, is numerous only in tracts most remote from human habitation, where it is said to assemble in flocks of frequently five hundred each. Aquatic fowls are in prodigious numbers, particularly several species of wild geese, thousands of which are taken in the vicinity of Hudson's gulf. The bird which most astonishes by its numbers is a species of pigeon, which breeds in the northern parts, and migrates to the south at the approach of winter, much more indeed in some years than in others, in flocks of many millions. The varieties of the serpent are in considerable number; but the rattle snake, so denominated from the rattling of dry joints of bone at the end of its tail, is not found northward of the forty-fifth degree of latitude. Various other reptiles are copious in places adapted to their nature. Marine animals, among which are various kinds of the seal, the whale, and numerous tribes of other fish, abound along the coasts.

Fossils.

Concerning the fossils of this part of the globe we can at present say but little, as nothing beneath the surface of the earth, and extremely little of the surface itself, has as yet been explored; but that it is deficient in riches of this nature we have no reason to suspect. In all the northern

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parts to the north of lake Winnipig, and eastward from the same to the gulf of Hudson, the substratum of the soil seems mostly granite, while to the west and south of this lake lie vast beds of limestone, between which and the granitic region are situated all the great basons of fresh water in North America.\* A tract in the north so abounds in copper, that a stream which flows through it to the Arctic ocean, has thence been denominated the coppermine river. Vast beds of mineral salt exist in many parts, as is evinced by saline wells and other tokens. For instance, westward of the Unjiga river, in its approach to the Slave lake, concreted salt, perfectly white and pure, may be collected in any quantity, around the numerous pools and springs of salt water, which appear in that tract. In other places have springs been seen whose margins are covered with sulphureous incrustations; and fountains of bitumen, particularly in territories near the Elk river, have been discovered, into which a pole, twenty feet long, may be inserted perpendicularly downward; without resistance. Stratum also of coal have been found; and probably this valuable fossil may be copious in many parts.

The history of this as yet uncultivated part of the earth's surface is only a registry of discoveries of its coasts by navigators, and of its interior by travellers, as the history of its few savage inhabitants, among whom are no records, is unknown. In a search for a north-west passage to the East Indies, which continued to be an object of hope and enter-

History.

\* Mackenzie, p. 403.

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prize till the latter part of the eighteenth century, the English, under Martin Frobisher, in the year 1576, discovered the strait which bears his name, in the sea which was afterward called the strait of Davis, from John Davis who explored it in 1585, between Greenland and the main continent of America. In 1610, the important discovery was made by Henry Hudson of the extensive gulf called Hudson's bay, the coasts of which where a trade in furs was found very profitable, have since been examined by other navigators. The earliest discoverers of the Western coasts were Spaniards, one of whom Francisco Gali, viewed the shores of the continent between the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth degrees of latitude, and admired the snowy mountains of the great northern chain.\* The next who attempted to explore these tracts were the Russians, who had possessed themselves of Siberia, the part of the old continent the nearest to the new ; but their discoveries extended not far to the south. The first Russian discoverers of the American coasts were Beering and Tchirikof, who sailed from Kamtchatka in 1741. From the former the channel between the extremities of the two continents bears the name of the strait of Beering.

The Spaniards, after an intermission of nearly a hundred and seventy years, renewed their voyages northward on the American coast, not for the promoting of geographical knowledge, but for the prevention, if possible, of any settlements which other European nations might meditate

\* Humboldt's *New Spain*, 8vo. London, 1811, vol. 2, p. 360.



to establish, in regions of which the Spanish crown claimed exclusively the dominion. A Spanish captain, named Juan Perez, in 1774, anchored, with his crew, on the ninth of August, "the first of all European navigators, in Nootka road, which they called the port of San Lorenzo, and which the illustrious Cook, four years afterwards, named King George's Sound."\* Cook, and his successor, Captain Gore, explored the coast to the strait of Beering, and beyond it as far as the permanent ice of the Arctic sea permitted. Other expeditions were subsequently made by Spanish officers, which, with those of the famous English navigator, Vancouver, in the years 1792, 1793, and 1794, completed the survey of the north-western coast. For the exploration of the interior parts a journey was performed on land by Hearne, and two voyages were accomplished along lakes and rivers by Mackenzie. The former having taken his departure from Churchill river, which falls into Hudson's gulf, arrived, by a north-westerly course of near thirteen hundred miles, in the June of 1771, at the mouth of the Coppermine river, under the latitude of seventy-two degrees. The latter, having embarked in a canoe, at Fort Chipewyan, at the lake of the Hills, proceeded to the Slave lake, and thence, by a stream called from his name Mackenzie's river, in the July of 1789, to the Arctic ocean, near the seventieth degree. In his second expedition, which was directed south-westward, he sailed from the same fort up the Unjigah, and passed thence by a portage to the Oregon, whence he arrived by land, in the July of 1793, at

\* Humboldt, vol. 2, p. 364.

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an inlet of the Pacific ocean, about the fifty-second degree of latitude, the first of all Europeans who traversed North America from the Atlantic to the opposite shores.

## Commerce.

The voyages performed for the discovery of the coasts and inlets of this immense region have led to the establishment of an extensive commerce in furs and peltry, the only products of these wilds as yet considered as worthy of being rendered objects of exportation. The English formed factories on the coasts of Hudson's gulf for a traffic with the savages, but in 1673 the trade was confined by patent to an exclusive corporation, termed the Hudson's bay company. The factories are chiefly settled on the rivers Moose, Albany, Severn, Nelson, and Churchill. The French also of Canada, while they remained in possession of that country, maintained the same commerce with the savages, and extended it much farther. The English, since they became possessors of Canada, have carried their enterprizes beyond former limits, especially since the institution of a mercantile association styled the north-west company, in 1783, whose agents have erected factories along the Saskatshawin river, and seem to be approaching the Pacific ocean. Blankets, ammunition, and various manufactured articles, are given in exchange to the savages for the products of the chase. The goods are conveyed in canoes made of the bark of trees, particularly the birch. The canoes thus are light for occasional transportation over-land, and, if easily damaged, are also easily repaired. These crazy vessels are navigated thousands of miles by intrepid mariners, who are wonderfully patient of cold, fatigue, and hunger. At a portage

the vessel is unloaded or lightened, according to circumstances, and the merchandize is carried on men's shoulders to the next place of embarkation ; while the canoe is either floated empty, or partly disburthened, through the rapid, or carried over-land in like manner as the cargo.

The earliest traders on the western coast were the Russians, who have formed small factories in the north-western parts, as far toward the south as the fifty-ninth degree of latitude, which seems to be the limit of their commercial operations, or of any dominion in America which they can justly claim. These indeed seem of all Europeans the best adapted for an advantageous traffic in these regions, from their hardy modes of life, and their trade by land with China, the chief market for peltry. By the discovery of Nootka sound, by the celebrated Cook, a new scene of commerce was opened for furs, particularly that of the marine otter ; but this trade has been ruined for a time by the competition and irregular conduct of different nations, particularly Anglo-Americans. No means are furnished for the forming of a just estimate of the quantity of furs and skins of the beaver, the marten, the lynx, the otter, and various other quadrupeds, exported by the way of Hudson's gulf, Canada, and the western ports : but we know that the traders of Canada\* have procured above a hundred thousand beavers' skins in the space of a year.

The inhabitants of this immense region, indigenous in our conception, as we have no knowledge of anterior occu-

Inhabitants.

\* Mackenzie's Introduction.



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Eskimoes.

Occidentals.

Persons.

pants, may, for the convenience of giving to the reader such information concerning them as can be collected, be considered as divided into three general classes, the Eskeemoes, the Occidentals, and the interior aboriginals. The Esquimaux or Eskimoes, who dwell along the northern coast, from Hudson's gulf and the sea of Davis to the Pacific ocean, are the same with those who inhabit Labrador and Greenland, in the accounts of which countries they are described. Of the Occidentals, by which term are designated the inhabitants of that western region which lies between the Pacific and the Northern Andes, our knowledge is extremely limited. They consist of various tribes or nations, which are different, in their personal characteristics, from the rest of the Americans, and from one another.

Of the personal conformation and complexion of the Occidental Americans several partial accounts have been received, but not such as enable us to form thence a general character which could prove satisfactory. We find that to the north of the fifty-first or fifty-second degree of northern latitude the hair of the inhabitants, altogether differently from that of the interior aboriginals, is generally of a brown or chestnut colour, sometimes approaching to fair.\* Their complexions also seem in general less dark, and some tribes are found, which, in the prominence and regularity of the features, and fairness of the skin, bear a strong resemblance to the people of northern Europe. High cheek-bones appear

\* Vancouver, vol. 4, p. 105.—La Perouse, vol. 3, p. 195.

to be universally prevalent: but, instead of attempting a general portrait from observations too few and scanty, the notice of some particulars may prove less unsatisfactory to the reader.

About the sixtieth degree of latitude, and to the northward of it, the people were found of a stature not exceeding the common height; of a square make, or with strong chests; with heads disproportionally large; short and thick necks; large and broadly spreading faces, inclined to flatness; eyes, though not otherwise small, yet not large in proportion to the face; noses with full and round tips, which are hooked or turned upward; broad and white teeth, equal in size, and evenly set; black, thick, strait, and strong hair; strait beards, generally thin, but sometimes thick, and frequently of a brown colour on the lips; and skins sometimes white, without any mixture of red, but sometimes brownish or swarthy.\* A little to the north of the fifty-fourth degree, a tribe was discovered with large eyes, European features, and a skin less dark than that of the German peasants, though the people dwelling around were of a different cast of features and complexion.† The inhabitants of the territories situated about the fifty-second degree are in general of a middle stature, with round faces, high cheek-bones, a complexion between the olive and copper, small grey eyes with a tinge of red, hair of a dark brown hue incli-

\* Cook's Third Voyage, Book 4, chap. 5.

† Humboldt, vol. 1, p. 145.

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ning to black, and heads so flattened by art both before and behind as to terminate above in the form of a wedge.\* This cuneated shape of the head continues onward to the south, to the countries about the Columbia river. It is caused in the time of infancy, when the skull is soft, by the pressure of two boards, covered with soft leather, the one applied to the frontal bone, the other to the occipital.

The people, however, who dwell to the south of the fifty-first, or fiftieth degree of latitude, appear to be a race essentially different from the more northern tribes. The inhabitants of the coasts about Nootka sound are described as below the common stature, with fleshy or plump, but not muscular bodies; faces commonly round and full, sometimes also broad; high and prominent cheeks, above which the face is frequently much depressed, or seemingly fallen inward, quite across, between the temples; noses flattened at the base, with wide nostrils and a rounded tip; foreheads rather low; small eyes, black, and rather languishing than sparkling; the mouth round; round lips somewhat thick; teeth tolerably equal and well set, but not remarkably white; hair in abundance, coarse and strong, and universally black, straight, and lank; and either thin beards or none, the effect of eradication.\* The skin seems fair in its natural state. The body is rather clumsily framed, and the limbs very small in proportion, crooked, with projecting ankles, and large and ill shaped feet. In these deformities they agree with the tribes who dwell about the lower part of the river

\* Mackenzie, p. 370.

† Cook's Third Voyage, Book 4, chap. 2.



Columbia. These are represented as of a diminutive stature in general, a bad shape, an unpleasing appearance, with broad, thick, and flat feet, thick ankles, crooked legs, a wide mouth, thick lips, a moderately sized nose, fleshy, wide at the extremities, with large nostrils, and generally low between the eyes, but, in some rare instances, high and aquiline; and with eyes generally black, but sometimes of a dark yellowish brown, with a black pupil.\* Their complexion is a coppery colour, but somewhat lighter than that of the interior aboriginals. The deformity of the legs is attributed in great measure to their mode of sitting on their heels, and to tight ornamental bandages worn by the females.

The custom of rendering the forehead flat, which is operated on all persons of both sexes on the coasts, about the Columbia, and thence northward through six or seven degrees of latitude, diminishes eastward, so as at first to be confined to females, and at length to cease entirely, to the east of the northern Andes. The tribes of Shoshonees or Snake Indians, who dwell at the foot of these mountains, and who are supposed to have come from the eastern side, and who still at certain seasons pass thither for a time, appear not to have adopted this mode of deformation: yet they might be suspected to be of a kindred race with the neighbouring occidentals, since they are described as of a diminutive stature, with thick flat feet and ankles, and crooked legs;† to which another account adds a crookedness

\* Lewis and Clarke, p. 436.

† Lewis and Clarke, 4to. p. 312.

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of body, high cheek-bones, large light coloured eyes, and such meagerness as to contribute to give them a frightful aspect.\* The inhabitants of the coasts nearer to the north, about the fifty-fourth degree, and even the fifty-second, and thence beyond the sixtieth, give themselves another artificial deformity more disgusting than the flat forehead. This is a horizontal incision made, in the time of infancy, quite through the under lip, which causes the appearance of a second mouth. A thin piece of wood of an oval shape, commonly about three inches long and two broad, is worn in this orifice, the artificial lips of which are received into grooves made round the edge of the wooden ornament. This horrible mode of decoration seems in some tribes wholly, and in others chiefly, to be applied to the female sex.

Habits.

The habits worn by the occidental aborigines of America are various, but are every where, as may be expected, rude, and in general inadequate for the purposes of modesty or comfortable warmth. The various tribes, like savages in general, are variously ornamented or disfigured, with trinkets, with paint, or with indelible figures impressed on the skin. The trinkets are worn in strings on the legs and arms, or suspended from the ears, or septum of the nose, perforated for that purpose. On the northern parts of the coast, about Cook's inlet, the common garment of both sexes is a close robe of skin, with the hair mostly outward, reaching generally to the ankles, sometimes only to the

\* Lewis' Account, 8vo. p. 10.

knees, with a hole above barely sufficient to admit the head, and with sleeves reaching to the wrists. The head, legs, and feet are commonly naked ; but some have high caps in the form of a truncated cone ; some have leathern stockings extending half-way up the thigh ; and almost all have mittens for the hands from the paws of bears. For a defence against rain they use an outside garment made from the intestines of the whale, or some other large animal, like that which is used by the Eskeemoes, whom also these clans resemble in their boats and instruments for fishing. Farther southward, toward the fifty-second degree of latitude, a robe is worn either of skin or manufactured from the filaments of the inner bark of the cedar, or some other tree, falling to the heels behind, and a little below the knees before, with a cape in the form of an inverted bowl. A cap is also used in these territories, sometimes a kind of leathern shoe, and in rain a short mantle of matting : but for the covering of those parts which civilized nations are most careful to conceal, no means are employed, except a small apron of fringe carried by the women, which answers not the purpose otherwise than quite imperfectly. Garments of thick leather, in case of expected battle, and other defences against weapons, are occasionally carried also.

Flax and the wool of some wild quadrupeds are rudely manufactured into a kind of cloth by the people about Nootka sound. Beside various dresses occasionally worn, for war or ceremony, often monstrous and frightful, the common garb of the inhabitants of this part of the coast is a kind of flaxen cloak, ornamented at the edges with fur



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and fringes, reaching below the knees, passing under the left arm, and tied over the right shoulder, in such manner as to leave both arms free, and to cover the left side, but to expose their right, except when the vestment is collected by a girdle. Over this is placed a mantle, similar in stuff and ornaments, covering the arms to the elbows and the body to the waist, resembling a round dish inverted, with a hole in the middle, through which the head is thrust. On the head is a cap of fine matting, in form of a truncated cone, tied under the chin with a string, often decorated at top with a knob or a bunch of tassels. Among the tribes about the Columbia the dress of the men is a small robe of skin, reaching to the middle of the thigh, tied across the breast by a string, with the corners hanging loosely over the arms. Sometimes, instead of this, a blanket, woven by the fingers, is used. All parts of the man, with this imperfect vesture, except the back and shoulders, are exposed to view. The robe of the women descends not below the waist; but the lower parts of the body are incompletely covered by a kind of fringe-work of rushes, flags, or bark of trees, sometimes interwoven with fur. The covering of the head is a conical cap of similar materials, tied under the chin, in like manner as that of the people of Nootka. To notice more varieties would be useless, especially as an intercourse with Europeans may introduce in a few years considerable alterations.

Language.

The languages of the occidental tribes, of which our knowledge is altogether scanty, appear to be as various as their personal characteristics. The speech of the more northern inhabitants, as about Cook's inlet, is guttural; but

the words, which sound as sentences in the ears of Europeans, are pronounced in general with strength and distinctness. The language of Nootka, which is essentially different from the more northern dialects, is far from harsh or disagreeable, abounding more in labial and dental, than in guttural sounds. Yet some of its syllables cannot accurately be represented by the letters of our alphabet, nor easily expressed by Europeans, particularly one which very frequently occurs. This is approximated by Roman characters in the word *opulszthl*, the name of the sun, and *onulszthl*, that of the moon. The words often terminate in *z* and *ss*, but much more commonly in *tl*. Thus *Yucuatl* is the real appellation of the harbour, which Cook, from a remarkable inattention, or inaccuracy in hearing, conceived to be called *Nootka*. From the little which is known of this language we have ground to suspect an affinity between it and the ancient Mexican.\* About the Columbia the pronunciation of several tribes is so guttural, that nothing "seems to represent their tone of speaking more than the clucking of a fowl or the noise of a parrot. This peculiarity renders their voices scarcely audible, except at a short distance, and, when many of them are talking, forms a strange confusion of sounds. Their common conversation consists of low guttural sounds, occasionally broken by a loud word or two, after which it relapses, and can scarcely be distinguished"† by a stranger. How far this mode of speaking may resemble, or differ from, the clacking of the

\* Cook's third Voyage, book 4, chap. 3 and 6.—Humboldt, vol. 2, p. 369.

† Lewis and Clarke, p. 321, 374.

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Hottentots, we cannot pretend to know, until the discourses of both kinds of people shall have been heard and described by the same observers.

Houses.

Beside various kinds of huts or cabins, like those of other savages in America, habitations of an uncommon sort are in use with the occidental tribes, especially near inlets and rivers where fish are copious. These, both in sides and roof, are composed of planks, retained in due position by poles, posts, and ligatures. Each house contains commonly three, four, or more families, whose distinct apartments are so imperfectly separated, that the whole fabric may be considered as having a rude resemblance to a long stable, with two ranges of stalls, and a broad passage in the middle, from end to end, between them. A hollow in the floor, without hearth or chimney, serves as a fire-place. Apertures in the roof, longitudinal at the ridge-pole, or otherwise disposed, imperfectly emit the smoke and admit the light. These houses vary in size and other circumstances. In some the roof is flat and horizontal; in others shelving from one side-wall to the other; and in others shelving from the ridge-pole to the sides, in the manner of European houses. Some are partly sunk in the earth to the depth of from about four to six feet, above which they rise to the height of six or eight: in others, which are from twelve to fourteen feet high, the floor is on the surface of the ground: and some are built on platforms, elevated on posts, from twelve to near thirty feet above the soil. The last, which are ascended by trunks of trees notched, serving as ladders, appear to be commonly the largest, as they are found from



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a hundred to a hundred and twenty feet long and about forty broad ; while others seem generally between thirty and sixty feet in length, and between fourteen and thirty in breadth : some, however, built immediately on the ground, have been seen of a vast size, even a hundred and sixty feet long and forty broad. The roofs of some, beside boards, have also a covering of bark, in the manner of thatch.\*

With the mode of life, and state of society, of these Occidentals, our acquaintance is so very superficial, that little on that subject can be said with precision. The tribes in general, differently from those of a merely pastoral or venatic life, appear to be stationary, depending chiefly for subsistence on the produce of the seas and rivers. Their food consists partly of berries, roots, and other vegetable substances, but in much greater proportion of aquatic animals, particularly salmon, which ascend the rivers in prodigious numbers. These and other fish, as herrings and sliced porpoises, are preserved for store by drying. The two latter are commonly eaten in that state without any other preparation. The salmon is in general merely warmed, except while it is fresh, when it is boiled or roasted. The operation of boiling is performed in wooden vessels by the immersion of red-hot stones, in succession in the water. The roes of fish, incrustated and dried on the tender branches of the pine, or on a species of grass, are eaten as winter's food, together

\* Lewis and Clarke, p. 369, 382, 392, 431, 515.—Mackenzie, p. 329.—Cooke, book 4, chap. 3.—Vancouver, vol. 3, p. 128, 405 ; vol. 4, p. 25, 26.—La Perouse, vol. 3, p. 199.

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with these vegetables. Among the species of vegetable food is the inner bark of certain trees, pounded and prepared in various ways, as a substitute for bread. Some tribes on the northern parts of the coast devour fresh fish, or some parts of them at least, in a state entirely raw. The boats, arms, and instruments of the northerners are almost the same with those of the savages of Greenland. Toward the south, as about the Columbia, the boats or canoes are from fifteen to above fifty feet long, each consisting wholly of a single trunk of a tree hollowed. One of the largest carries a cargo of four or five tons, and a crew of twenty or thirty persons. They are managed with such dexterity as to ride safely in tempestuous seas, where a European boat would inevitably perish. The Occidental tribes have been every where found uncleanly in their habitations, persons, and food. To this is ascribed a remarkably premature decay of the teeth and eyes among the dwellers about the Columbia river.

## Manners.

Concerning the government, religion, and manners of the occidental tribes, a few superficial remarks only, can be made. Their government seems mostly like that of savages in general, where every man is perfectly free, and no chief has authority to command, but merely to advise: yet in some tribes on the coast hereditary monarchy is said to be established, as at Nootka, where the *tays* or prince is affirmed to be absolute, uniting in his person both the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.\* The Nootkains, who have

\* Humboldt, vol. 2, p. 370, 371.

made some advances toward civilization, and have regulated their year by fourteen months of twenty days each, with intercalations to supply the deficiency, are found to believe in the existence of two principles concerned in the government of the world, a good and a bad, and in a contest between them. Notions of a like nature seem to prevail in other tribes;\* but of their various and absurdly superstitious ideas very little is known, nor would perhaps a particular knowledge of them be worthy of being communicated. Some forms of worship are observed in several communities, where wooden images of rude formation are in use. The modes of burial are various. Of these to mention two may be sufficient. The one is to wrap the bodies in the skin of animals, and to place them, one over another, in wooden houses appropriated to that purpose. The other is to leave them to moulder in the open air, in canoes, on spots of ground somewhat elevated, chosen from some superstitious motive. Much diversity has been discovered in the manners of different tribes. Many are thievish and treacherous, as is generally the case with savages: yet some have been found, with surprise, remarkably honest, particularly the Wollahs, who dwell about the Columbia river, at a considerable distance from the ocean. Some also have displayed a comparatively great mildness of manners, as the Chopunnish clans, who inhabit a neighbouring tract still farther from the ocean.†

\* Mackenzie, p. 374.

† Lewis &amp; Clarke, p. 535, 557.



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All the occidental tribes are addicted to gaming, as are men in general of barbarous manners, in whatsoever country they are found. These tribes, however, bear an honourable distinction from other savages in their behaviour to the female sex. Women among them are not only treated with respect, but also often assume authority and command. This, with seeming justice is ascribed to their mode of life. Among people purely venatic, where a precarious and often scanty subsistence is procurable only by the vigorous exertions of the male sex, the females are considered as of little utility in contributing to the common support, and therefore of little value. But where, as in these western tracts, the food consists chiefly of wild vegetables and fish, the women are as useful as the men in the acquiring of necessaries for the family or clan. Here the collecting of roots and berries devolves chiefly on the females, and they are as dexterous as the males in the management of boats and instruments of the fishery. The stationary life of this people also, and their plenty of provisions, occasion a treatment of the old and infirm different from that which is experienced by persons of this description in tribes which subsist by hunting. In the erratic life of the latter, who make long and laborious excursions in quest of precarious food, the infirm, who can give no assistance, nor accompany the rest without causing delay and trouble, become a useless incumbrance, and are therefore abandoned. But in a stationary state of society, amid a sufficiency of provisions, the conversation and advice of the aged and experienced are regarded as compensating for the victuals which they consume. We find indeed, that among the occidental Americans, the aged of both sexes,

when even deprived of sight and the use of their limbs, are held in respect, and treated with tenderness. Notwithstanding however that so much deference is paid to females, men prostitute their wives, daughters, or sisters, to strangers without scruple.\*

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The Interior aborigines belong to that general race of indigenous Americans, of which I have spoken in the general view, and which extends throughout the vast continent of America, from the vicinity of the Eskeemoes to the strait of Magellan. The colour of the skin is coppery, or a reddish brown; the hair universally of a jetty black, glossy, smooth, coarse, flat, and pendent; the eyes black, small, deeply set, and oblong, with the corners directed upward toward the temples; the nose commonly straight; the lower part of the face in general triangular, while the forehead approaches a square form; the cheeks prominent; the cast of the countenance suspicious and ferocious, contrasted with an expression of gentleness about the mouth; the forehead less prominent, and the occipital bone less curved, than in Europeans; the face either destitute of a beard, by the eradication of the hairs, or thinly furnished with that appendage;† and “the mouth is formed like a shark’s, that is, the sides are lower than the front, and the teeth, small, white, and regular, are sharp and cutting, like those of the cat or the tiger. May not this form be naturally accounted for from their habit of biting from a large piece when they eat,

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Aborigines.

Persons,

\* Lewis and Clarke, p. 441, 442.—Vancouver, vol. 4, p. 254.

† Humboldt, vol. 1, p. 141—148. Volney, p. 403—413.

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without ever using a knife? This habit evidently gives the muscles a position which at length they retain, and this position ultimately modifies the solid parts likewise.\* They are in general well shaped, but less robust than the Europeans, and various in stature. Variations also in personal characteristics, even shades of colour, have place in the different tribes, by which those who are well acquainted with them can easily distinguish them. Some distinctive marks are the effects of art. One of the most striking is found in the tribe of the Choctaws, who, by a compression in the days of infancy, mould the head into the form of a truncated pyramid. The shades of colour are so different, that, while in some tribes the skin is hardly darker than in the southern Europeans, it is in others almost as black as that of the Negroes,† as is the case among the Mississaguiss, at lake Ontario.

## Habits.

The habits or dresses of the aboriginals, improperly termed Indians, of North America, vary in the different tribes, and in a difference of circumstances. Many go almost naked, even in severe weather, using only some of the articles which compose a full clothing. These articles consist principally of a kind of shoes, hoes, aprons, a coat, an outside robe, a girdle, and some appendages. Those who have an opportunity of trading with Europeans have mostly exchanged their leathern garments for those of cloth or blanketing, but the rest still continue to clothe themselves

\* Volney, *ibidem*.

† Weld's Travels in North America, 8vo. London, 1799, vol. 2, p. 224.



with skins. The vestments of both materials are fashioned in the same manner, and are in general nicely decorated, at the seams and edges, with porcupine's quills and other ornaments.

The shoe, called *moccasin*, is formed of a single piece of the skin of the buffalo, elk, or deer, fitted closely to the foot like a sock, with a seam from the toe to the instep, and another behind at the heel, and with sometimes a sole of what seems a thick parchment, from the skin of the elk. The hose or leggings, of leather or cloth, extending from the instep to the middle of the thigh, are fitted tightly to the limbs, and sometimes sewed on them so closely as to remain immoveably fixed until worn into rags, and are fastened to a narrow girdle by two strings, one outside of each thigh. Another narrow belt is also in use, to which are appended two small aprons, one before, the other behind, and through which are drawn, behind and before, the ends of a narrow piece of cloth, or leather, passing between the thighs. What may be termed the coat is in the form of a shirt, open at the neck and wrists, and descending only to the upper ends of the leggings. The outside robe is a kind of mantle of leather, sufficient to envelope the whole body, or a great square piece of cloth, or a blanket, thrown about the shoulders, and variously placed or folded, according to the fancy of the wearer, but often drawn over the left shoulder and under the right, in such manner as to leave the right arm free. The garments of the women are scarcely distinguishable from those of the men. Some wear a skin, or cloth, about the middle, descending to the knees; and some a

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shirt which reaches to the ancles. The hair of both sexes is variously modified. Among males many permit only one lock to grow, which falls backward in length from the crown of the head. Both men and women wear ornaments in great variety, as bracelets on the arms, pendants in the ears, and sometimes in the nose. Some men slit the ears, and distend them so as to touch the shoulders. The faces in general are horribly painted or daubed, especially in preparing for a warlike expedition, with ointments of different colours, particularly black and red.\*

Language.

The languages spoken by the numerous little nations or tribes of savages, who roam through the immense wilds between the northern Andes and the European settlements on the eastern side of North America, have not as yet been made so much the object of philological enquiry, as to afford grounds for the furnishing of any satisfactory information on that subject to the reader. Such an inquiry, extensively and judiciously pursued, by tracing affinities between different languages, would tend to discover a consanguinity, or an ancient connexion, between different clans, and also to determine whether an affinity exists between any of these American dialects and any of those which are spoken in the old continent. Whether, however, any valuable knowledge would result from this labour may be doubtful, since these barbarous dialects, wholly oral, or unrecorded by any permanent characters, may have greatly changed in a course

\* Weld, vol. 2, p. 230—238. Mackenzie, p. xciii—xcv. 36, 37.—  
Lewis and Clarke, p. 64—66, 77, 648.

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of ages, and several may probably have altogether perished. Yet great pains are said to be taken by the American savages to preserve the purity of their languages, particularly in their orations at their public councils or assemblies, where orators are studious to display their eloquence, and the auditors attentive to criticise the speeches. But the languages of savage tribes, whose ideas are few and little abstracted, must necessarily be barren, how figurative soever their studied orations may be. The dialects in general of the interior aboriginals contain many polysyllables, and in several the words end frequently in vowels. Some dialects are perceptibly more guttural than others; but the females are observed to pronounce the languages much more softly than the other sex, in general indeed with a delicacy very pleasing to a European ear.\* Most of these dialects, or the greater part of them, are comprehended under two general heads, the Knisteneaux and Chepewyan languages. The former, in all its variations, is spoken by the tribes who dwell in the vicinity of Hudson's gulf and the British settlements in Canada, and thence as far westward at least as the lake of the Hills. The latter is in use among those who inhabit the more western regions from the sixty fifth degree of latitude southward to about the fifty-second.†

Habitations.

The habitations of the savages of North America are rude in the extreme. In general they are only temporary huts, composed of a frame-work of poles and a covering of bark. The poles are fixed with their lower ends in the ground,

\* Weld, vol. 2, p. 288.

† Mackenzie, p. xcii, cxvii.



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and the upper joined at top, so as to form a slope for the outside covering. Some huts are conical; others of different figures. In some a hole at the top serves for a chimney. Some are only sheds open on one side. These are often placed in pairs, each pair with the open sides opposite to each other, and a fire in the space between them for the accommodation of both. Sometimes four sheds are disposed in the form of a quadrangle, with one fire in the center for them all. Several tribes dwell in tents covered with skins. Tents of this description of an extraordinary size are used as common halls for public consultations. In their hunting expeditions, in the rigour of winter, the savages frame their temporary lodges from the snow itself, which they use, on the occasion, as the material of building, and which, consolidated by the frost, forms a firm enclosure, and an effectual shelter from the winds.

Food.

The food of the savage tribes in this immense region consists principally, often wholly, of the flesh of animals, eaten frequently almost raw, sometimes entirely in that state. Their meat, when cooked, is boiled, fried on embers, or stewed or roasted with hot stones, covered with leaves, or grass, and earth. The boiling, where European pots have not been procured, is performed in kettles of stone, or in wooden vessels, in which the water is heated by red-hot stones. They much prefer the fat of the flesh, as that of the bear, to the lean, as the former remains longer in the stomach under the operation of digestion. The lean however is necessarily chosen for the making of what is called *pemikān*, meat preserved for store. For this purpose the flesh

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of the larger kinds of quadrupeds, cut into thin slices, and dried in the sunbeams, or on a wooden grate over a slow fire, or by the frost, is pounded carefully between two stones. In this state it may, with care, be kept fit for food during several years, without salt or any substitute for it. It is mixed with an equal quantity of the thickest or firmest kind of the fat of animals, melted, and poured on it in a boiling state. Carried in baskets or bags, in expeditions, it forms a nutritive sustenance, when supplies from the chase or the fishery fail. The pemikan is sometimes varied by other mixtures. Thus in the composition of a superior kind, marrow and dried berries have a place. To berries, wild roots, the rind of trees, and other vegetables, recourse is had, when the more usual, and more favourite kind of aliment cannot be obtained. Some tribes boil vegetables with the flesh of bears, the fat of which gives such a flavour as is considered as delicious even by some Europeans. Salt is used as a seasoning by some tribes; but many never taste salt, spices of any kind, or bread, at any time in their lives. The flesh of dogs is eaten at religious feasts, but not in general as common food.

The superstition of men in a savage condition ought hardly to be dignified with the name of religion, nor can a regular statement of their wild and irrational fancies be easily formed. Religious notions "form not a regular system among savages, because every individual, in his independent state, makes for himself a creed, after his own manner. To judge from the accounts of the historians of the first settlers, and those of late travellers in the north-

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west, it appears that the savages generally compose their mythology in the following manner. First a great *manitou*, or superior *genius*, governs the earth and the aerial meteors, the visible whole of which constitutes the universe of a savage. This great *manitou*, residing on high, without any clear idea where, rules the world, without giving himself much trouble ; sends rain, wind, or fair weather, according to his fancy ; sometimes makes a noise to amuse himself ; concerns himself as little about the affairs of men as about those of other living beings that inhabit the earth ; does good without taking any thought about it ; suffers ill to be perpetrated, without its disturbing his repose ; and in the mean time leaves the world to a destiny or fatality, the laws of which are anterior and paramount to all things. Under his command are subordinate *manitous*, or *genii*, innumerable, who people earth and air, and preside over every thing that happens, and have each a separate employment. Of these *genii* some are good, and these do all the good that takes place in nature. Others are bad, and these occasion all the evil that happens to living beings. It is to the latter chiefly, and almost exclusively, that the savages address their prayers, their propitiatory offerings, and what religious worship they have, the object of which is to appease the malice of these *manitous*, as men appease the ill humour of morose and envious persons. They offer little or nothing to the good *genii*, because *they* would do neither more nor less good on this account."

" This fear of evil *genii* is one of their most habitual thoughts, and that by which they are most tormented.



Their most intrepid warriors are, in this respect, no better than the women and children. A dream, a phantom seen at night in the woods, or a sinister cry, equally alarms their credulous and superstitious minds. But, as wherever there are dupes, knaves will start up, we find in every savage tribe some juggler; or pretended magician, who makes a trade of expounding dreams, and negotiating with the manitous the business and desires of every believer. Notwithstanding their intercourse with the genii, the magicians are greatly puzzled to explain their nature, form, and aspect. Not having our ideas of pure spirit, they suppose them to be corporeal substances, yet light, volatile, true shadows, and *manes*, after the manner of the ancients. Sometimes they and the savages select some particular one, whom they suppose to reside in a tree, a serpent, a rock, or a cataract, and him they make their *fetish*, like the negroes of Africa. The notion of another life is a pretty general belief too among the savages. They imagine that, after death, they shall go into another climate and country, where game and fish abound, where they can hunt without being fatigued, walk about without fear of an enemy, eat very fat meat, live without care or trouble, in short be happy in every thing that constitutes happiness in this life. Those of the north, place this climate toward the south-west, because the summer winds, and the most pleasing and genial temperature, come from that quarter."\* The analogy is easily observable which the religious notions of the indigenous tribes of North America bear to those of the primitive

\* Volney, p. 477—480.

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Grecians, to those of the barbarous hordes at present in Northern Asia, and indeed to those of people in a state of savage ignorance in every part of the world. Where Christian missionaries have endeavoured to propagate their doctrines among the more eastern tribes, they seem to have in some degree modified the ancient and proper opinions of the American oboriginals ; but no real conversion to Christianity appears to have had place ; except with an exceedingly small number whom the Moravians have persuaded to adopt the agricultural, instead of the venatic life.

The superstition of the savages is so blended with fancied magic, on which, more than on drugs of any kind, they depend for the cure of diseases, that every thing of a religious nature is by them termed medicine. In feasts which are celebrated for religious purposes, in some of which the flesh of dogs, offered in sacrifice, is eaten, what is called the bag of medicine is opened with great ceremony, containing several sacred articles, one of which, in some tribes, is a little image. A piece of furniture indispensable on such occasions is the sacred stem of a pipe, the smoking through which is a most material part of the ceremonial. This stem, kept in reserve with reverential care, is adapted on the occasion, to a pipe filled with lighted tobacco, and transferred from hand to hand till each man takes a whiff. Every partaker in the rite of smoking is regarded as bound by an obligation, according to the end proposed in the giving of the feast. Thus, if the feast be furnished by a public contribution, and war be the object, the partakers are solemnly enlisted for the expedition. When a chief holds a religious

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assembly at his own mansion, all persons, who join in the ceremony of smoking, are bound to entertain no grudge or hostile design against the chief, or against one another.\* In some tribes, as among the people called Mandans and Minnetaries, a huge stone, conceived to be oracular, is an object of religious respect. When a deputation visits the sacred spot, the deputies perform the rite of smoking to the stone, and of presenting the pipe to it, and afterwards retire to an adjacent wood for the night. In the morning the destinies of the nation are found marked by a number of white spots on the stone. These are deciphered by connoisseurs, who probably had secretly made them in the night.†

No species of rule, which can rightly deserve the title of government, has place among the savage aboriginals in the interior of North America. In each tribe or nation all men are perfectly equal in political power. None can have any authority to command, nor can any one have influence, except by superior age, wisdom, or talents. Thus "the excessive independence of each member, and the absence of every social tie, from the want of all subordination and authority, have constituted such a turbulent and *terrorist* democracy, that it may well be called a real and fearful anarchy."‡ In all tribes are chiefs, some for counsel, some for war, or for both; but their authority depends wholly on their persuasive powers, and the opinion entertained of their wisdom or prowess. As all the members however have one interest at heart, the general welfare of the nation,

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\* Mackenzie, p. xcix—ciii.

† Lewis and Clarke, p. 121.

‡ Volney, p. 448.



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and as the chiefs are well known to be actuated by no other motives, whatsoever measures they recommend are mostly adopted.\* In many tribes are found hereditary chiefs for advice or counsel; but the leaders in war are selected for their courage, experience, and skill. Among some of the more southern tribes, less erratic than the northern, a few faint marks of advancement toward a more regular government, are observed. Thus in many villages a kind of police is established for the preservation of internal peace. In each of these an authority is constantly exercised by different men in succession, two or three at a time, nominated by the chief; an authority held so sacred, that no resistance is made to these officers of police, who, in the suppressing of quarrels or disorders, are not sparing of blows.†

The savages, of whom I am treating, attach so little of importance to property, that their chiefs are generally the poorest in the several tribes. Some indeed have imagined that "no right of property exists among savages. This fact, though generally true, requires however some more precise distinction. Even the most vagabond and ferocious savage has an exclusive possession of his arms, clothes, trinkets, and moveables; and it is remarkable, that all these objects are the produce of his own labour and industry: so that the right of this kind of property, which is sacred among them, evidently derives from the property which every man has in his own body and limbs, and which consequently is a natural property. Landed or fixed property is absolutely unknown in tribes which are constantly wan-

\* Weld, vol. 2, p. 273.

† Lewis and Clarke, p. 66.

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dering : but there are cases of exception among those, whom the goodness of the soil, or any other reason has rendered sedentary. Among tribes who live in villages, the houses, built either of trunks of trees, of mud, or of stones, belong without dispute to the man by whom they were erected. There is a real property in the house, in the ground which it covers, and even in the garden which is sometimes annexed. It appears farther that, in certain nations, where agriculture has made some progress, the children and relatives inherited these. Consequently there was a full and permanent right of property. But in other nations, at the death of the possessor, all was confounded together, and became objects of division, either by lot or choice. If the tribe migrates for some time, and deserts its village, the individual then retains no positive right to the soil or the ruined hut ; but he has those of the first occupier, and of the labour bestowed by his own hands."\* Except such pittances of ground, the whole of the region inhabited by the interior aboriginals may be said to be an immense common.

The small and thinly scattered tribes of savages, who roam through, or in any manner inhabit, this immense common, bear various denominations, many of which appear to have been whimsically, or from some fanciful conceptions, bestowed on them by Europeans. These petty clans are commonly stiled nations, though they seldom consist of more than three or four hundred families each, sometimes of not more than one hundred. The tribes are generally

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\* Volney, p. 448—450.

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subdivided into bands, which severally bear distinctive appellations. The bands are often so small as to consist of only three or four families each, particularly in the dreary northern parts, where food is so scanty and precarious. The term nation is sometimes used in an extensive sense, as signifying a combination or system of many tribes, speaking the same language, and consequently supposed to be of kindred blood. Thus the Knisteneaux, or Kilistinons, extend their venatic courses from the gulf of Hudson, on the northern side of the Saint Lawrence river, as far to the west as the Athapesco lake, and seem to be making a progress still farther westward. The Algonquin race, who speak the same language, are sometimes confounded with this extensive people, and are sometimes considered as under a separate denomination. The numerous tribes of the Chepewyans, who appear to make a contrary progress toward the east, occupy all the country between the Kilistinons and Eskeemoes, and extend on the eastern side of the northern Andes, as far to the south as the fifty-second degree of northern latitude on the river Columbia. The Nadowasees, and Assiniboins, inhabiting the plains about the Saskatshawin and Assiniboin rivers, appear to be advancing toward the northwest.

Depopulation.

The progress of indigial tribes toward the west and northwest is caused by the advance of European colonies in these directions; those of the English from the east, and those of the Spaniards from the south. According as the colonists push their encroachments into the wilderness, converting portion after portion into arable ground,



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the savages retire before them, together with the wild beasts, on whose flesh they depend for sustenance. Their numbers decrease still faster, from a variety of causes, than the extent of their hunting grounds is diminished. Even before the arrival of Europeans among them, their increase in population, if increase had place, was extremely slow, not only from mutual slaughter in their wars of tribe against tribe, but also from the infecundity of their females, and the great difficulty of rearing children. The infecundity of the females is caused by their licentiousness in celibacy, their practice of procuring abortion, and the labours and hardships imposed on them by the savage tyranny of their husbands. The difficulty of supporting infants amid the hardships of savage life is such, that, when twins are born, one of them is commonly abandoned, and the mother takes care not to attempt to rear more than two or three children, suckling each, in succession, during two, three, or four years. Since their intercourse with Europeans they have decreased rapidly in number, principally from two causes, the introduction of spirituous liquors, and the infection of the small-pox. By spirituous liquors, which, from the intemperance characteristic of savages, they swallow, whensoever procurable, so long as they can stand or sit, their health is undermined or destroyed, and quarrels arise in the rage of ebriety, in which they kill or maim one another, unless their women, which is generally the case, remove all their weapons out of their reach. This constantly, though slowly, operating cause of depopulation is far exceeded in horror by the temporary ravages of the small-pox, to check which, this people, from ignorance and superstition, attempt not to apply a remedy.

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A late traveller describes the havoc known by him to have been made, through a great extent of country, by this terrible pest, " which spread its desolating power, as the fire consumes the dry grass of the field. The fatal infection spread around with a baneful rapidity, which no flight could escape, and with a fatal effect that nothing could resist. It destroyed with its pestilential breath whole families and tribes, and the horrid scene presented to those, who had the melancholy and afflicting opportunity of beholding it, a combination of the dead, the dying, and such as, to avoid the horrid fate of their friends around them, prepared to disappoint the plague of its prey, by terminating their own existence. The habits and lives of these devoted people, which provided not to-day for the wants of to-morrow, must have heightened the pains of such an affliction, by leaving them not only without remedy, but also without alleviation. Nought was left them but to submit in agony and despair. To aggravate the picture, if aggravation were possible, may be added the putrid carcases, which the wolves, with a furious voracity, dragged forth from the huts, or which were mangled within them by the dogs, whose hunger was satisfied with the disfigured remains of their masters. Nor was it uncommon for the father of a family, whom the infection had not reached, to call them around him, to represent the cruel sufferings and horrid fate of their relatives, from the influence of some evil spirit, who was preparing to extirpate their race; and to incite them to baffle death, with all its horrors, by their own poinards. At the same time, if their hearts failed them in this necessary act, he was himself ready to perform the deed of mercy with his

own hand, as the last act of his affection, and instantly to follow them to the common place of rest and refuge from human evil."\* From all concurrent causes of decrease in their numbers, we may reasonably presume, that, in two or three centuries, if not much sooner, this race of men will have become extinct. To form an estimate of their present population would be no easy task. It appears to be much overrated by those who assign the proportion of an individual to every twenty thousand acres, especially in the sterile regions of the north.

From the modes of savage life in this immense wilderness the population must necessarily be thin in the extreme. Those tribes who reside in the vicinity of the great lakes and rivers draw much of their sustenance from the fishery, although their improvident habits prevent them from availing themselves effectually of this sort of nourishment: but far the greater number depend for subsistence on the flesh of deer and other such animals as they can procure by shooting, by snares, or any other modes of the venatic art. For an adequate supply of this kind of food to an improvident family, who unsparingly gluttonize on whatsoever they acquire of this favourite aliment, an extensive range of territory is required. In the vast wilds of the north, where, from the prevalence of cold, the vegetation is scanty, and consequently the animals, thereby maintained, comparatively few, the wretched inhabitants are obliged, in small parties, to roam so incessantly in quest of prey, the support

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\* Mackenzie, p. xiv. xv.



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of life, that any who, from weakness or fatigue, are unable to keep pace with the rest, are left behind, and, if they cannot, by following the traces of their comrades, overtake them at their resting places, are abandoned finally to their fate. In the more southern parts, where pasturage and animals of the chase are more copious, the inhabitants associate in larger bands, and are less erratic; though there also they frequently change their quarters, according to their wants and other circumstances, removing their tents, or abandoning their old huts; and erecting new. In the vast plains toward the south the use of the horse has, since its introduction, rendered hunting more easy. Beside various other modes of obtaining their prey, they encompass on horseback a herd of buffaloes, and kill a number with arrows or other weapons, evading, by dexterous horsemanship, the assaults attempted by the surrounding animals in their own defence.

Some tribes, where the land is fertile, cultivate small patches of ground, in which, with the hoe, they plant maiz, potatoes, and other vegetables. To allure some neighbouring aboriginals from the venatic life to the agricultural, and thus to entice them into a state of civilization, has been zealously attempted by the Quakers of Pennsylvania, that most benevolent of all sects of Christians. To teach them by example, some persons were sent to reside among the Oneidas and Sennekas, two tribes of a confederated people, denominated the six nations, or more properly the five. The execution of this plan was attended with most promising effects, in the early years of the nineteenth century:

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but we may reasonably fear that these effects have been unfortunately subverted by the influence of a war, since waged, between the British and Anglo-American governments, in which the savage clans were, as auxiliars, involved. The wars indeed of the European colonists in North-America against the indigenous tribes, together with the introduction of ardent liquors, have been chiefly instrumental not only to prevent the improvement of this unfortunate race, but even, by destroying their plantations, and driving them to the life of hunters, to replunge them into the savage state, when they had made any progress toward emerging from it. The countries now occupied by the Anglo-Americans were, at the arrival of the first colonists, found in the possession of tribes who had made progress in agriculture, some advancement toward civilization, and were governed by chiefs styled sachems, who seem to have been vested with considerable authority. These clans, by their hostilities with the colonists, have been gradually exterminated, or driven into the interior parts, and, by the destruction of their nascent governments, reduced to a lower state of savageness. Such wars were more destructive, as the contest was more unequal, than those which had place among the savages themselves, though the latter were rendered more bloody, than they otherwise would have been, by the greater wildness of anarchy into which the clans were fallen.

In their wars is exhibited the cruelty of the savage Americans in its most hideous forms, and in them also are shewn, in their utmost stretch, those faculties of the mind and body

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of which they are possessed. The causes of these wars are various, but the most frequent is an inextinguishable spirit of diabolical revenge, transmitted often from generation to generation, for the gratifying of which, by the destruction of the hated object, a savage sometimes, even quite alone, performs a journey of several hundred miles, through forests, swamps, and other tracts almost impassable, exposed to hunger, thirst, and the inclemencies of the weather. To kindle the flame of vengeance in the breasts of the youth, when a hostile expedition is resolved by the chiefs of a tribe, the song of war is sung, composed in such terms commonly as the following. 'The bones of our compatriots lie uncovered: their bloody bed has not been washed: their spirits cry out against us: they must be appeased: let us go and devour their slayers: sit no longer inactive on your mats: lift the hatchet, console the spirits of the dead, and tell them that they shall be avenged.' In their military expeditions, either in smaller or greater parties, their grand object is to destroy as many as possible of their enemies, at the least possible expense of lives on their own side. They therefore never engage in open fight, but proceed entirely by ambuscade and surprise, concealing their approaches with the utmost precaution. If their enterprise is successful, they bring away what prisoners they can, and also the scalps of the dead and wounded, as trophies of their triumph. The scalp is the hair of the head together with the skin, which, with a knife and their teeth, they tear from the skull with horrible dexterity. Some Europeans, who have been scalped alive, have survived this dreadful operation, and, by wearing a plate of silver or tin on the crown of the head,



for protection from cold, have enjoyed good health many years.

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When the victors have returned home to their village or encampment, the prisoners are obliged to pass between two ranks formed by women and children, who with sticks and bludgeons, beat them terribly as they proceed. After this a selection is made of some to be consigned to death, and of others to be permitted to live. The men of the latter destination are presented to women who have lost their husbands or sons. If they are rejected by these, they are inevitably doomed to death: but, if they are received, they become the substitutes of the deceased, whose places they were designed to occupy. They adopt all the enmities of their new associates, losing all affection for their own relatives and their tribe, whom they now regard as aliens and foes, and against whom they join in hostilities with fierceness and hatred. In fact their former tribe, considering them as indelibly disgraced by their captivity, would not receive them if they should return; which renders this transference of their friendship to their former enemies less wonderful than it might otherwise appear.

Commonly, when a captive is consigned to death, he is fastened to a stake, near a pile of burning wood, and tortured by the surrounding crowd in a most dreadful manner. Beside other modes of torment, some apply red-hot irons to his limbs, and others, tearing pieces of flesh from his bones, roast and eat them in his presence. Avoiding to injure the vital parts, they sometimes prolong this infernal operation

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during two or three days. "What is related of these terrible scenes by travellers, who have witnessed the cannibal joy of the actors in them, and particularly the fury of the women and children, and with what atrocious delight they emulate one another in acts of cruelty; what they add of the heroic firmness and unalterable coolness of the sufferers, who not only express no sensation of pain, but brave and defy their tormentors with the haughtiest pride, bitterest irony, and most insulting sarcasms, chaunting their own exploits; enumerating the friends and relatives of the spectators, whom they had slain; particularizing the tortures which they had inflicted on them; and accusing them all of cowardice, pusillanimity, and ignorance in the art of tormenting; till, dropping piecemeal, and devoured alive, before their own eyes, by their enemies drunk with rage, they lose their last breath with their last words: all this would be incredible to civilized nations, were not the truth established by incontrovertible testimony, and will some day be treated as fabulous by posterity, when savages shall no longer exist."\* For the peculiar cruelty of these people, and their peculiar fortitude in braving the most horrible torments, we cannot otherwise pretend to account than from the force of the most deeply rooted habits.

A judicious traveller, who studied the manners of the wild aboriginals of this vast region, speaks thus, in endeavouring to develope their general character: "The American savage, placed on a soil abounding in grass and shrubs, find-

\* Volney, p. 458, 459.

ing it difficult to retain captive animals always ready to flee into the woods, and feeling it more pleasant to pursue them there, as well as more convenient to kill than to feed them, has been led by the nature of his situation to become a hunter, a shedder of blood, and an eater of flesh. Thus a hunter and butcher, who has had daily occasion to kill, and in every animal has beheld nothing but a fugitive prey, which he must be quick to seize, he has acquired a roaming, wasteful, and ferocious disposition ; has become an animal of the same kind with the wolf and the tiger ; has united in bands or troops, but not into organized societies. Unacquainted with the ideas of property and of preservation, he has remained a stranger to all sentiments of family, and of a care to preserve which these inspire. Confined to his own powers, he has been obliged to keep them incessantly bent to their utmost stretch ; and hence an independent, restless, unsocial humour ; a proud untameable spirit, hostile toward all men ; a habitual state of excitement in consequence of permanent danger ; a desperate determination to risk at every moment a life incessantly threatened ; an absolute indifference to the past, which has been toilsome, and to the future, which is uncertain ; and lastly an existence wholly confined to the present. These individual manners, forming the public manners of the tribes, have rendered them equally thriftless, greedy, and continually under the yoke of necessitousness, and have occasioned the habitual and encreasing want of extending their rights of chase, the frontiers of their territory, and invading the domains of others. Hence more hostile habits without, and a more constant state of a war, irritation, and cruelty."



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“The habit of shedding blood, or of merely seeing it shed, corrupts every feeling of humanity : but to this are added several other causes, arising both from the subject itself, and from its concomitants, which have a powerful effect. First, the spirit of personality which every savage carries with him to war ; a selfishness founded on this, that every individual of the tribe, from the land being in common, considers the game in general as the fundamental means of his own subsistence, and consequently deems every thing that tends to destroy this as attacking or threatening his own life. Among savage clans, poor and few in number, war directly endangers the existence of the whole society, and of each of its members. Its first effect is to famish, its next to exterminate the tribe. It is equally natural therefore, that every member should identify himself intimately with the whole, and display an energy carried to the utmost, since it is stimulated by the extreme necessity of defence and self-preservation. A second reason of the animosity of these wars is the violence of passions, such as the point of honour, resentment, and vengeance, with which every warrior is inspired. The number of combatants being small, every one is exposed to the eyes both of his friends and enemies. Every act of cowardice is punished with infamy, the near consequence of which is death ; and courage is stimulated by the rivalry of companions in arms, the desire of revenging the death of some friend or relative, and every personal motive of hatred and pride, often more powerful than self-preservation.”

“The third reason is the nature of these wars, in which quarter is neither given, received, nor expected. The least

danger is the loss of life, for, if the savage be only wounded or made prisoner, the sole prospect before him is that of being scalped immediately, or burned alive and eaten in a few days. His fortitude under torments is stimulated by despair, and the sense of the impossibility of saving himself by retraction or weakness. He resembles those animals, which, attacked in their last retreat, defend themselves without any hope of escape ; and we know what prodigious efforts nature will then display in the weakest and most timid. In the savage it is the accumulated action of fanaticism and necessity : but a very interesting physiological problem nevertheless remains still to be resolved, namely, what is that singular state of the nerves, what that movement of the electric fluid, by which sensibility is deadened, or exalted to such a pitch as to annihilate pain ? The last motive to ferocity in the wars of the savages, and in their entire character, is the whole system of their education, and the direction which parents endeavour to give their inclinations from the earliest age."

"From their infant state they endeavour to promote an independent spirit. They are never known to beat or scold them, lest the martial disposition which is to adorn their future life and character, should be weakened. It is to procure more intrepid defenders that mothers thus spoil their children, who, at some future day, according to the general practice of these people, will despise, domineer over, and even beat them. Sometimes they spend their evenings in relating the noble deeds of their relatives, or of the heroes of their tribe : how in their lives they killed, scalped, and

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burned such a number of their enemies: or how, having had the misfortune to be taken prisoners, they endured the most horrible torments with the proudest bravery. At other times they entertain them with the domestic quarrels of the tribe, their causes of complaint against some of their neighbours, and the precautions to be taken to revenge them opportunely. Thus they give them at once lessons of dissimulation, cruelty, hatred, discretion, vengeance, and bloodthirstiness. They never fail of seizing the first opportunity of a prisoner of war, to have their children present at the punishment, to tutor them in the art of tormenting, and to make them partakers in the canibal feast, with which these scenes terminate. It is obvious that such lessons must make a profound impression on a young mind. Accordingly their constant effect is to give the young savages an intractable, imperious, rebellious disposition, averse to all contradiction and restraint, yet dissembling, knavish, and even polite; for the savages have a code of politeness, not less established than that of a court. In short, they contrive to make them unite all the qualities necessary to attain the object of their prevailing passion, the thirst of revenge and bloodshed. Their frenzy in the last point is a subject of astonishment and affright to all the whites who have lived with them."

"On the whole it may be said, that the virtues of the savages are reducible to intrepid courage in danger, unshaken firmness amid tortures, contempt of pain and death, and patience under all the anxieties and distresses of life. Doubtless these are useful qualities; but they are all con-



fined to the individual, all selfish, and without any benefit to the society. Farther they are proofs of a life truly wretched, and a social state so depraved or null, that a man, neither finding nor hoping any assistance from it, is obliged to wrap himself up in despair, and endeavour to harden himself against the strokes of fate. In pursuing my investigation I do not find that I am led to more advantageous ideas of the liberty of the savage. On the contrary, I see in him only the slave of his wants, and of the freaks of a sterile and parsimonious nature. Food he has not at hand: rest is not at his command: he must run, weary himself, and endure hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and all the inclemency of the elements and seasons; and as the ignorance, in which he has been bred, gives him, or leaves him a multitude of false and irrational ideas, and superstitious prejudices, he is likewise the slave of a number of errors and passions, from which civilized man is exempted, by the science and knowledge of every kind which an improved state of society has produced.”\*

With the affectation of insensibility under the most tremendous sufferings the apparent apathy of the savages, in the concerns of life in general, seems to have connexion. They express no surprise at the sight of any object, howsoever new or extraordinary, no joy at the meeting of the nearest relatives, nor grief at their departure, and receive both good and bad news with seeming indifference. Howsoever famished, they betray no symptom of hunger; but, when

\* Volney, p. 446—469.

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arrived at the huts of their friends where they expect their cravings to be satisfied, they sit in apparent ease, waiting patiently, without asking for any, till food be offered them. Consonant with their habitually affected apathy is the gravity of their deportment. They maintain a serious and solemn air, at least before strangers. They never interrupt any person in speaking, and they in general behave with a kind of politeness, which shews a habit of avoiding to give offence. They are hospitable in a high degree, sharing unreservedly their food with visitants to the last morsel: but this may be ascribed in great measure to their improvident disposition, as they are apt to consume with a thoughtless prodigality the provisions of the day, without any regard to the danger of posterior famine. Their prodigality is accompanied by an indolence, from which they can only be roused by the calls of hunger, or the thirst of revenge, in which case they display the most vigorous persevering exertions. From indolence and a want of a sense of decency they are filthy in their persons, huts, and food, and commonly swarm with vermine, which they eat as a delicacy as fast as they can catch them.

The insensibility, which the savages affect under their own sufferings, is real with respect to the sufferings of others. The feelings of compassion appear to be wholly strangers to their breasts. Of the treatment of their prisoners I have spoken already. A cruelty characteristic of savage manners is also displayed in the treatment of females, to whom is consigned the carrying of burdens, and every other species of drudgery; while the men disdain to carry any thing

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except their arms, and never lend assistance to alleviate the hardships of the weaker sex. They are liable besides to various maltreatment, to be unmercifully beaten, maimed, and even murdered, by their brutal husbands. Hence frequently mothers, to save their female offspring from a life of such misery, extinguish the vital spark immediately at the birth. Inured to cruel treatment, these females are cruel in their turn. To join with frantic rage in the torturing of a prisoner, and in the killing of a captive woman or child, by their own hands, they feel a quite favourite amusement. The appearance indeed of pain, or distress of any kind, affords commonly a subject of enjoyment, or mirth and laughter, to both sexes. From their inferiority in strength and courage women are accounted inferior beings. That no value is set on female chastity may partly perhaps have arisen from this principle. Licentious amours in her years of celibacy are not at all regarded as faults in a female. At some of the feasts, at least among the more southern tribes in this region, the most immodest exhibitions are made, of the intercourse between the sexes, in the view of all the company. Men prostitute their wives, without scruple, to strangers. This is a usual act of hospitality to guests. Yet if a wife indulges a galant without her husband's permission, she is liable to be most cruelly punished by her savage lord, who perhaps bites the nose from her face, or puts her to death. Polygamy is in general practice, and the exchanging of wives between man and man is also usual.



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## Customs.

Among the customs of the people of whom I am treating is the ceremony of marriage, which varies in different tribes, but the most general mode appears to be the following. After a feast on the occasion, the two persons intended to be joined in matrimony stand holding a wand about four feet long, at opposite extremities, in the presence of three or four males and as many females. When they have made a declaration of their affection and intention, the wand is broken into pieces, in number equal to that of the witnesses, of whom each takes a piece, and preserves it with great care. When they determine on a divorce, the witnesses, in the presence of a company assembled for the business, throw these pieces into the fire, by which ceremony the union is considered as dissolved. At weddings, and on other occasions, dancing is a custom. Different dances are appropriated to different affairs, and these again vary in the different tribes ; but to convey to readers a clear conception of the differences would perhaps be impossible, and of little utility. The dance of the pipe, which is performed at the arrival of ambassadors of peace from a hostile clan, or on the passage of an eminent stranger through their villages, is the most pleasing to Europeans, as being attended with more graceful movements, or less violent gestures, than others. The dance of war, exhibited in preparing for a hostile expedition, or after its completion, is terrific in the extreme, as its motions are designed to represent the modes of killing, scalping, and other acts of ferocity, accompanied by those hideous yells which they raise in real combat, while their weapons are so brandished, that to avoid being

wounded by one another requires expertness or address in the highest degree. Women in general are excluded from joining with the men in dances, but they have some appropriated to their sex, which they perform apart.

The pipe of peace, called *calumet*, which is smoked with the most solemn formality at the settling of pacific treaties, or at the reception of friendly strangers, consists of a bowl of red marble, and a wooden stem about four feet long, curiously painted with hieroglyphics, and adorned with the most beautiful feathers of birds. The decorations are different in the different tribes, which are easily distinguished at first sight, of their calumets. When a treaty of peace is concluded, a painted hatchet or club is buried in the ground, to denote that all animosities have ceased between the contending parties. Treaties are recorded by belts of *wampum*. The substance thus named is the inside of a shell called the clam, found in the Atlantic, on the coast of North America. At present this is sent to England, where it is manufactured into beads, which are sent back, and sold to the savages. The beads are of two sorts, the white and the violet coloured, or purple. The latter, which are esteemed equivalent in value to their weight in silver, are more esteemed. They are sometimes sewed, in various arrangements, on broad belts of leather, but are more commonly formed into strings on thongs drawn through them, ten, twelve, or more of which, according to the importance of the business compose a belt. These

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belts are produced at particular periods, and the treaties, of which they are the memorials, are severally recapitulated, for the recording of them in the memory. The customs which regulate the giving of proper names, for the designation of individuals, appear not clearly explicable. Children commonly bear the name of the mother, not of the father, as the parentage cannot be so doubtful on the female side. The name also of the tribe or band, which is mostly that of some animal, is generally retained. Appellations or titles are, besides, conferred on chiefs and distinguished warriors, after their arrival at the age of maturity, which bear a reference to the hieroglyphic mark of their families, or to their superior abilities or exploits. At funerals they inter without burning, and commonly destroy all the personal property of the deceased. In mourning they cut short the hair, and blacken the face with charcoal.

Arts,

Among the arts of the savages of North America we may perhaps reckon that by which they find their way through forests, swamps, and other pathless wilds. In this they are by some supposed to surpass all other people on our globe : at least they are doubtless surpassed by none. The point at which they aim, though hundreds of miles distant, they arrive at by a direct or undeviating course. This expertness, so surprising to Europeans, is doubtless the result of early and incessant habit, and of an undistracted attention. Among the phenomena, by the observation of which they distinguish the different points of the compass, is the appearance of the trees. The bark, on the northwestern



side, exposed to piercing winds from that quarter, is thicker and harder than elsewhere on the tree, and of a different colour. They shew not less expertness in the pursuit of men and quadrupeds, whose traces they follow with astonishing sagacity. From their ability thus to traverse vast spaces of land, in various directions, to the intended spots, we may naturally suppose, which indeed we are informed to be the fact, that they are in general well acquainted with the geography of their country, or the relative situations of its different parts. Of the arts of reading and of writing they are totally ignorant. Events are recorded in the memory, which, in political transactions, is assisted by belts of wampum and some rude hieroglyphics. They reckon their years by winters, or, as they term them, snows ; and the number of days consumed in a journey they call so many nights. They divide the year into twelve moons, or lunar months, which they denominate from some circumstances attendant on the seasons. Thus the moon of frogs has place in May, and the moon of intense cold in January. An intercalary month, termed a lost moon, is occasionally added when an aberration from the true or solar year becomes strikingly evident, which is commonly observed at the end of a period of thirty moons.

In medicine they are acquainted with some simples of great efficacy ; but the powers of these are often frustrated by superstition. Thus the patient is prevented from the refreshment of sleep, or of any sort of repose, by the noise of incessant rattles, employed to frighten away the malign

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nant spirit, who is imagined to be the author of the malady, and to be continually on the watch to renew the aggression. In some cases of distemper, particularly of the feverish kinds, a mode of cure is practiced of the same nature with the Russian manner of bathing, which sometimes causes death, and sometimes recovery. The patient is thrown into a violent perspiration in a heated hut, and thence suddenly plunged into cold water or snow. They have instruments of music, among which is a species of flute : but, instead of regular tunes, they produce from them only wild or unconnected notes. Their mechanical arts are few and simple ; but by time and attention they form some utensils in a neat and curious manner. Thus baskets are made of so close a contexture as to contain water, in the same manner as a pail or bowl. Their weapons are often very nicely ornamented : but the bow, except in remote parts toward the west, is from commerce with Europeans, superseded by the gun. The tomahawk, a peculiar weapon, is a hatchet of small size, to which a pipe for the smoking of tobacco is often attached. This, though they seldom suffer it to part from the hand, they can throw with such dexterity as to hit a small mark, at the distance of ten yards, with the forepart, which projects, and terminates in a sharp point. Their canoes, which are constructed of the bark of the birch, the elm, and other trees, bound firmly on a slight frame-work of wood, are remarkable for their lightness. A boat of this kind, which carries twelve men on the water, may be carried by one on the land. In such frail vessels, which bear a cargo of a tun or more in weight, beside the crew, voyages are

performed of hundreds of miles, sometimes two or three thousand, along the lakes and rivers of these immense regions. Other species of canoes are also in use, among which are trunks of great trees hallowed into the form of slender boats, and pointed at the extremities.\*

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\* Beside the writings of travellers already quoted concerning the manners, &c. of the Savage Americans, a multitude of others might be adduced, as those of Carver, Long, Adair, Bernard Romans, Hearne, &c. &c.





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# GREENLAND

IS of great, but unknown, dimensions, its extent to the north\* being yet unexplored, nor is it decided whether it be entirely environed by water, but it is more probable that it is joined on the northwest to the American continent, and ought rather to be accounted an American than an European region. Vast masses of dazzling ice† fill the surrounding seas, partly floating and partly fixt, and displaying a strange variety of fantastic forms. Islands innumerable of various sizes border the coasts, which are deeply

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\* Navigators have sailed on its western side as far as the 78th degree of latitude, and on the eastern as far as the 80th.

† The most noted field of fixt ice is that which is called the Eisblink or Iceglance, situate on the western coast between the 62d and 63d degrees. It is an high field of shining ice, resembling a vast arched bridge, extending twenty-four miles in length and six in breadth across the mouth of an inlet. Its glance in the air is seen like an Aurora Borealis at the distance of many leagues, and its arches, through which the water returns in strong currents at the tide of ebb, are from 40 to 120 feet high.

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indented by many inlets. Its shores are generally high and rocky, especially on the western side, and there more especially towards the south ; and the mountains, which every where fill the land, rise close to the sea shores, craggy, pointed, and of great elevation, their summits being visible to mariners at the distance of forty leagues.\* These mountains, and with them all the interior country, are covered with perpetual ice and snow ; but the lower grounds on the coasts appear in summer clothed with a kind of verdure.† Few brooks and no rivers water these rugged regions, and the interior country is totally uninhabited. Greenlanders dwell along the western coasts as far to the north as the 75th degree of latitude, nor is it certainly known whether any people subsist in these countries still nearer to the pole. A few Danes are settled along the same coasts as far as the 71st degree ; but the eastern coasts, though formerly open to navigators, and actually settled by a Norwegian colony in the ninth century, are now so blockaded with ice as to be inaccessible to ships, and as a passage to them by land from the western side through the icy mountains of the interior country, is also impracticable, it is not

\* The Hiertatak or stag's horn, situate on the western coast about the 64th degree, and reckoned the highest mountain of Greenland, is seen at the distance of 60 leagues at sea.

† The Norwegians, who discovered this country in the ninth century, gave it the name of Greenland, because they affected to think that the eastern coast, on which they first arrived, appeared more green than Iceland, from which island they had last departed.



certainly known, whether these eastern shores have, at present, any inhabitants or not.

Here, as in other places situate in high latitudes, two seasons only divide the year, the spring and autumn being excluded. That which is called the summer is commonly of five months duration, from the beginning of May to the end of September, during great part of which time about the solstice there is continually day, for to the north of the arctic circle the sun remains many weeks together without setting, and to the south it disappears but a few hours, and then so strong a twilight reigns, that by its aid alone a man can see well enough within doors to read the smallest print at midnight. The noontide heats in the longest days are scorching, in calm weather and in places where the sun's beams centre, but in general the Greenland summer is neither very warm nor comfortable. The snows remain even on the shores until June, and begin to fall again in August and September. Thick fogs envelope the coasts from April to August; and the cold emitted by the vast masses of permanent ice is always chilling at night, or when the sun is low in the horizon. The winter of seven months duration is altogether rigorous, all being involved in depths of ice and snow. The frost-smoke issues from the sea like the smoke of an oven, and feels less cold to a man immersed in it than the dry air around; but when it is wafted into a colder region of the atmosphere it is converted into the frost shower, being frozen into small icy particles, which, driven on land by the winds, bring with them a cutting cold almost insupportable. The subtile snow dust, with which the air

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is filled when the snows are drifted by the winds, is not more tolerable. Night with little interruption invests the skies for some months, the sun but peeping two or three hours above the horizon in the south, and not appearing at all for many weeks together in the north; but, besides the twilights, such is the brightness of the moon and stars, which shine in those northern climes with superior lustre, and such the splendor of the Aurora Borealis that a man can see well enough in the open air to read. The sea is generally open notwithstanding the intense cold, permitting the Greenlanders to pursue their occupations of fishing and seal-hunting, on which their subsistence depends; but when it happens that, for two or three weeks together, a continued sheet of ice spreads from the shores many leagues over the sea, navigation is precluded, and famine is the consequence. The parhelion or mock sun, so frequently seen in arctic climates, is particularly often seen in Greenland, as also the halo or luminous circle about the moon. It is remarkable that when the winter is uncommonly severe in the temperate climates of Europe, it is mostly uncommonly mild in Greenland, and vice versa. It is also remarkable that the springs or wells in Greenland rise and fall regularly with the tide, being higher at the tide of flood than the tide of ebb, and highest of all at spring tides. Lightning is rarely seen, thunder more rarely heard, and calm weather predominates, and that more in proportion as the country approaches the pole, but when storms come, which is generally in autumn, they blow with irresistible fury.

The earth in these regions, rendered sterile by the cold, yields hardly any vegetable for the subsistence of man,

corn has been frequently sown, and as frequently grown up with a promising appearance, but was always destroyed by the frost before it could attain maturity. Some low shrubs appear, but the country is entirely destitute of trees, which defect kind providence has in some measure supplied by drift wood, which is conveyed to the coasts by the winds and waves. Some spots of ground upon the coasts, accidentally manured about the dwellings of the Greenlanders, produce grass of so nutritious a quality that it has fattened a few sheep, brought from Denmark, to an uncommon degree, in an uncommonly short time ; but in general the surface is barren sand or stones instead of soil, and moss of various kinds the predominant growth, and in advancing towards the pole nature wears gradually a more barren aspect, until at length all vegetation ceases, and nothing meets the eye but naked rocks. The animal productions of the land are also scanty ; besides a few rein-deer, hares are found which are white all the year, and a kind of partridges called snow hens, which are grey in summer and white in winter ; but the two last are not esteemed as food by the Greenlanders, who prefer to them the flesh of foxes. The only tame animals are dogs, which howl instead of barking, are like wolves in appearance, and are mostly white ; they are chiefly used as beasts of burden ; from four to ten of them, harnessed to a sledge, draw the Greenlanders in state along the ice. But, to compensate in some degree for the penury of the land, the seas are prolific, and furnish great numbers of water fowl, fish, and seals, which constitute almost the whole subsistence of the Greenlanders, and in the catching of which they display surprising feats of dexterity.



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The king of Denmark claims the dominion of these frozen deserts, and some of his subjects from Denmark and Norway are settled on the western coasts, who trade in seals' blubber, skins, and eider down; vessels also from different European nations, particularly Holland, are employ'd in the Greenland seas, every summer, in the whale fishery.\*

The Greenlanders, who inhabit the western coasts, and who are the same kind of people with the Esquimaux on the opposite coast of America, have been computed not much to exceed 7000, and their number decreases yearly.† They are of low stature, most of them not reaching to the

\* The whale, though a fish, has red warm blood like that of land animals, and, like them, is furnished with lungs for breathing, brings forth its young alive, and suckles them. Of this fish there are many varieties, but that which is called the black or Greenland whale is generally from fifty to eighty feet long, and some have been found from one hundred to two hundred feet. It is not a fish of prey like some other species of the whale, but feeds on a whitish slime, which floats on the surface of the sea. Its throat is not more than four inches wide, and its mouth is destitute of teeth, but its upper jaw is furnished with about 700 barders, or blades, of which the whalebone is made. These barders are shaped like scythes, hang down like the pipes of an organ, ten or twelve feet in length, and are received into the under jaw, hollowed for that purpose, as into a sheath. These whales abound most between Spitzberg, Nova Zembla, John May's Island, and Greenland, where near four hundred ships have been employed in one summer in pursuit of them.

† Their number in the year 1730, was said to be 30,000, and in the year 1746, 20,000; so that they decreased one-third in 16 years; but the decrease afterwards seemed more rapid.

height of five feet, and have also the appearance of imbecility, but are notwithstanding active and strong. The colour of the face is olive, and the body all over is dark grey. The hair of the head is universally long, strait, strong, and coal black, but the beard is very thin, it being the custom to pull it out by the roots. The head is large; the face commonly broad and flat; the cheek bones high; the cheeks round and plump; the eyes small and black, but void of sparkling fire; the nose not flat, but small and projecting a little: the mouth commonly little and round, the under lip somewhat thicker than the upper. The hands and feet are small, soft, and clammy to the touch like bacon: the rest of the limbs large: the breasts high, and shoulders broad, especially in women, all of whom are obliged, from their early years, to carry heavy burdens, and so robust are these females, that one of them commonly carries a load for some miles, which would be almost sufficient for two Europeans to lift. The bodies of both men and women are fleshy, fat, and full of blood. Their blood is unctuous, hot, and dense; the steam emitted from their bodies in perspiration is hot and smells like train; and the vapour, which they breathe out from their lungs, is hot and dense, inso-much that when many of them are assembled in one apartment, even in winter, an European can scarcely bear the heat, or breathe for the thick exhalation. They suffer the rigorous cold of their climate with but thin covering, and with their heads and necks generally bare; and they sit in their houses mostly without any covering at all except their breeches.

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The Greenlanders are not very lively, much less addicted to extravagant effusions of mirth, but are cheerful when assembled in companies, and live together in surprising harmony without any form of government or religion, the law of reputation being the only restraint on their morals. Whatever superstitious fancies prevail in their minds, it is certain there is no form of religious worship among them, excepting the Christian converts of the Moravian brethren, who have with wonderful perseverance brought some hundreds of these poor people to the profession of the Christian religion. Though they are very hospitable and courteous to strangers, they have much pride, the consequence of much ignorance, and value themselves much above the Europeans, concerning whom they talk with much ridicule in conversation among themselves. Their names for numbers are continued no farther than five, but, by reckoning the fingers of both hands, and toes of both feet, some make a shift to number twenty, which is the extent of their arithmetic. They are extremely dirty in their way of living; their common every day-clothes drip with grease, and swarm with lice, which they crush between their teeth when they catch them: their vessels are no otherwise cleansed than by the tongues of their dogs; and when any of them presents a piece of meat to a person whom he means to treat with particular politeness, he previously licks it over clean with his tongue. Few of the Greenlanders live many years in one place, but remove in the summer from one part of the coast to another, fixing their winter quarters in whatever place seems most convenient. Among them, as in other rude nations, the carrying of burdens and other laborious works



are left to the women, the providing of food by fishing and seal-hunting being the province of the men.

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That which may be called the shirt of the Greenlanders is made of the skins of birds, the feathers inward: over this is a kind of vest mostly of seals' skin, and over that a coat of seals' skin, which is sewed up close to the chin, without any opening either before or behind, but is drawn down over the head like a shirt, the arms being thrust up into it. The breeches are of seals' skin, very short both above and below. The stockings are of the skin of young seals found in the bellies of their dams, and the shoes of seal skin bound over the instep by a thong which passes under the sole beneath. Over all, the men wear a large outside garment of seals' skin called a water coat, furnished with bone buttons when they go to sea. The dress of the women is nearly the same, but the nurses wear an outside garment bound round the waist with a belt, so wide behind that the child has room to lie within it at the woman's back, and is prevented by the belt from falling through. Here the infant tumbles entirely naked without any other swaddling clothes or cradle. The men cut their hair short, but the women wear it long.

The Greenlanders dwell during the winter in houses, and during the summer in tents.

The houses are built on steep rocks or elevated grounds, where they may not be incommoded by the afflux of water when the snows dissolve. There is no part of the house

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under ground, and it is raised no higher than barely to admit a man to stand upright. These habitations are near twelve feet wide, and of various lengths, up to seventy feet, in proportion to the number of families crowded together in one house, which is from three to ten. The walls are composed of broad stones and earth, and the roof of rafters laid across a longitudinal beam, which is supported by posts driven in the ground midway between the side walls. On the rafters are laid billberry bushes, over them sods, and over these fine earth. These dwellings have neither door nor chimney, but the use of both is supplied by a vaulted passage from twelve to eighteen feet long, made of stones and earth, entering into the middle of the house, and so low that a man must creep to enter. On the same side are windows two feet square, made of guts of seals or maws of fish; and under them a long bench for the accommodation of strangers, which is esteemed the most honorable seat in the house. Half the floor opposite to the windows is raised a foot higher than the rest with boards and skins, and divided into as many distinct apartments as there are families, resembling horses' stalls, and separated by skins drawn from the posts, which support the roofing beam, to the wall. The only fires ever lighted in these houses are lamps, one of which stands constantly burning at the partition post of each family, cut out of soft bastard marble, about a foot long, in form of an half moon, filled with train of seals, and furnished with dry moss instead of cotton, which burns so well, that, from the junction of so many lamps, the house is sufficiently lighted and sufficiently warmed. Over each lamp hangs a

kettle of the same stuff, in shape like an oblong box, a foot long and half a foot wide, in which their victuals are boiled.

The boats of the Greenlanders are of two kinds, and serve quite different purposes. The umiak or woman's boat is four or five feet wide, three feet deep, and from thirty-six to fifty-four feet long. It is flat bottomed and sharp at both ends. Its frame consists of a keel, ribs, upright posts, and laths joined together with whalebone, and it is covered with seals' skins. It is rowed only by women, and in it the families and effects of the Greenlanders are transported from one part of the coast to another, sometimes three or four hundred leagues.

The rajack or man's boat accommodates one person only. It is shaped like a weaver's shuttle, eighteen feet long, hardly a foot and a half wide, and hardly a foot deep. It is composed of a slender keel, longitudinal laths, and transverse hoops, which go round the sides and bottom, joined with whalebone. It is covered with seals' skins, which enclose it on all sides like a bag, leaving only one round hole in the upper part or deck, barely sufficient to admit the body of the rower, who sits with his legs stretched along the bottom. This hole is secured by a rim of bone, into which the rower tucks his water coat so tightly, that though billows break over him no water can enter the boat. He holds the middle of his oar with both hands at once, and strikes the water on both sides alternately, sailing at the rate of more than twenty leagues in the day, and making



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his way through stormy waves where an European boat could not subsist, and if he be upset, so that his head hangs down perpendicularly in the water, he restores himself and his boat to the proper posture by a swing of his oar. Armed with harpoons he pursues the seals which are the chief and favourite food of these people, and when occasion requires, he carries his little boat across a head-land or field of ice, and launches it again at the other side.

## SPITZBERGEN,

DISCOVERED by Sir Hugh Willoughby, an English navigator, in the year 1553, and improperly called by some New Greenland, and East Greenland, seems to consist of one great island, and many of smaller dimensions, whose range towards the north is not fully ascertained, but as none of them advance farther towards the south than the 75th degree of latitude, the rigours of their winter are extreme, and the land as bare and barren as the northern parts of Greenland lying between the same parallels of latitude, producing no species of tree or shrub, but supplied with drift-wood from the sea, and totally destitute of human inhabitants, but yielding subsistence to rein-deer and foxes, and particularly visited by the white bear,\* which is an unwelcome visitant also in Greenland. The coasts are high, and

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\* The white bear is a predacious animal, extremely fierce and formidable, inhabiting the arctic regions, particularly Spitzbergen. It is amphibious, and is seen chiefly on the fields of ice where it goes in pursuit of seals. It is much larger than any other species of the bear, its body being about the same size with that of an ox. Its head is long like a dog's, and its hair is long and soft like wool.

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in many places inaccessible, especially on the west, and the face of the country is extremely rugged, and full of dusky mountains, which are highest also on the west, and, like those of Greenland, are generally so steep and sharp pointed, that the ice and snow, which all the year fills the vallies, cannot rest on them. The surrounding seas swarm with whales, seals, and other marine animals, which are the object of pursuit to great numbers of European vessels, chiefly Dutch, which in summer visit these inhospitable coasts, whose sovereignty is vainly claimed by the king of Denmark.



## CHAPTER V.

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# CANADA.

*Site—Rivers—Face—Seasons—History—Vegetables—  
Animals—Fossils—Commerce—Boats—Area—Division—  
Population—Inhabitants—Government—Religion—Man-  
ners—Customs—Travelling—Towns.*

## CANADA,

EXTENDING along the vast river Saint Lawrence, from its mouth in the sea of Newfoundland, westward to lake Winnipeg, may be considered as having its natural boundary, on the northern side, in a ridge of highlands, which winds from the coast of Labrador in prodigious length toward the west, separating the waters which flow to Hudson's gulf from those which are received into the channel of the Saint Lawrence. Another ridge of highlands, on the southern side of that vast river, stretching southwestward, was declared, in a treaty with the United States in the year 1783, to be the boundary of Canada on that side, so far toward the west as its occurrence with the forty-fifth degree of

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Site.

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northern latitude : thence the bounding line was conceived to proceed westward along the stream of the Saint Lawrence, and through the chain of the great lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, and Superior. The limit most natural however, on its whole southern side, would be the stream of this huge river and its chain of lakes.

## Rivers.

To the Saint Lawrence Canada owes chiefly its importance. Of this mighty stream, its immense lakes, and its stupendous cataract at Niagara, I have treated in the general view. With a breadth of from ninety miles, at its mouth, to fifteen, at a greater distance from the ocean, and with a depth of from forty to ten or eighteen fathoms, this river is safely navigable by great ships of the line as far as Quebec, through a length of four hundred miles, by ships of three or four hundred tons, near two hundred farther, to Montreal, and by boats carrying two tons several hundred miles higher, except some short interruptions which can be easily remedied by canals.\* A great number of islands many of which have a beautiful appearance, are contained in the Saint Lawrence, which, above Quebec, spreads wide in some parts, and in others contracts into a narrow and profound channel. One of the largest of the islands is that of Orleans, near thirty miles long and ten broad, near Quebec city.

The country is intersected by a multitude of streams, which are received into the Saint Lawrence on its northern

\* Gray's Letters on Canada, 8vo. London, 1809, p. 37, 69.—Weld's Travels in North America, 8vo. London, 1799, vol. 2, p. 56—58.

side. Many lakes of various sizes are formed by these, or connected with them, and many of the rivers are navigable by boats or canoes. The most frequented of the auxiliar streams is the Utawas, or grand river, the navigation of which, however, is so interrupted, that in the course of two hundred and eighty miles not less than thirty-two portages occur, places where the goods and boat must be carried on land from one part of the channel to another. The Chaudiere and Montmorenci, which fall into the Saint Lawrence, the former on the southeastern side, about seven miles above Quebec, the latter on the northwestern, about the same distance below that city, are noted only on account of the cataracts which they form. About three miles above its influx, the Chaudiere, in a stream two hundred and fifty feet in breadth, falls perpendicularly from a height of a hundred and thirty feet, between very steep and lofty banks, amid a scenery wildly picturesque. On the quantity of water in the channel however depends in great measure the grandeur of the fall, which in times of flood appears awfully majestic. The stream of the Montmorency, only fifty feet broad in its channel, is so broken at its fall by rocks, and thus dilated, as to appear much broader. The height of the cataract, in which the water falls almost perpendicularly, is found to be two hundred and forty-six feet. The stream, in its descent from such an elevation, appearing like vast sheets of snow, forms a fine object to mariners in the Saint Lawrence, to whom it is clearly visible, as having place almost at the influx of the Montmorenci.\*

\* Gray 87—99. Weld, vol. 1, p. 319, 357—360.



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Face.

Canada may in great part be considered as the valley of the Saint Lawrence. This is particularly the case with Lower Canada, one of the two provinces into which this great country is politically divided, by a line imagined to run northwestward along the Utawas river. Here the country is enclosed between two very long ridges of highlands, from which several branches extend quite to the Saint Lawrence, forming either promontories, or lengthened banks of great height and steepness. In other parts level spaces of various extent intervene between the highlands and the river. The province of Upper Canada, lying on the northern side of the Saint Lawrence and its vast lakes, is in general a level country, consisting of extensive plains bounded by hills of not a great elevation. In Canada in general the natural features are gigantic, and fill the mind, at first view, with ideas of grandeur : the vast and admirably majestic river interspersed with beautifully verdant islands ; the immense expanses of clear water in the lakes, diversified in like manner with islands interspersed ; the stupendous cataracts, particularly the unequalled fall of Niagara ; the lofty chains of mountains, clothed with wood, visible to those who sail along the river ; and the stately and almost boundless forest, from which comparatively very little space has as yet been reclaimed by the industry of man.

The primeval forest indeed, from the mouth of the Saint Lawrence, through a great extent of territory up its channel, still, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, occupies all to the river's brink ; and even farther upward, where colonization and culture have place, " the strip of cultivated

ground, viewed from the river, is so small, compared with the high wood-covered mountains in the back-ground of the picture, that it is scarcely enough to take off the appearance of complete savage wildness. The *sombre* hue of the pine forest is a strong contrast to the lively verdure of the corn fields."\* The narrow border of cultivated land is however in some places thickly inhabited. "Nearly all the settlements in Lower Canada are situated close upon the borders of the rivers. For several leagues below Montreal the houses stand so closely together, that it appears as if it were but one village, which extended the whole way. It is pleasing beyond description to behold one of these villages opening to the view, as you sail round a point of land covered with trees, the houses of it overhanging the river, and the spires of the churches sparkling through the groves with which they are encircled, before the rays of the setting sun. The scenery in various parts is very fine. It is impossible, indeed, but that there must be a variety of pleasing views along a noble river; the Saint Lawrence, winding for hundreds of miles through a rich country, diversified with rising grounds, woodlands, and cultivated plains."† In Upper Canada, which promises at no very distant time a more numerous population, as being favoured with a more fertile soil and a warmer temperature, extensive scenes of smiling culture may in future ages be expected; but as yet the colonized spots bear to the dreary wilderness a quite diminutive proportion.

\* Gray, p. 37.

† Weld, vol. 1, 335, 336.

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## Seasons.

In Canada are felt the extremes of heat and cold, but the air is in general dry and salubrious. In the lower province the winter commences in November, and the earth remains covered, during six months, with snow, the general depth of which is about from four to seven feet above the surface of the ground. The Saint Lawrence itself is frozen quite over above Quebec ; but, opposite to that city, the operations of the tide, and of the current rendered impetuous by confinement, are such, as to prevent that circumstance from taking place oftener commonly than once in ten years. Here, as elsewhere in the northern climates, the cold acquires its greatest rigour in January, when Fahrenheit's thermometer falls sixty degrees below the freezing point, sometimes even to that degree at which mercury freezes : but in general the medial temperature in this month and in December is marked by twenty-two under the point of congelation. After the falls of snow in the early part of winter, the sky is commonly clear, the sunshine bright, and, except the cold, the weather extremely pleasant, as in Russia : but sometimes a temporary thaw takes place, which is attended with unpleasant circumstances and much inconvenience. In May the snow disappears beneath a scorching sun, and summer, with a rapid vegetation, succeeds, without an interval of spring. In July and August the thermometer rises to eighty degrees, and sometimes above ninety, sometimes to ninety-six. The heat is more mild in September, which seems to be the pleasantest month, yet partakes more of the nature of summer than of autumn. The latter season indeed appears not, in Lower Canada to have any place. The frosts begin to be felt in October ; but the influence of the sun



still continues to be such as to render the air in the day-time tolerably warm.\*

In Upper Canada the temperature partakes of that of those territories of New York and Pennsylvania which lie to the west of the great Apalachian ridge, where the cold is mitigated by a southerly wind, as I shall have occasion to state in treating of the Virginian regions. The winter therefore is shorter here than in the lower province, although, from the superior elevation of the land, the cold might naturally be expected to be greater. Thus at Niagara, the highest part of the platform, the severity of the winter's cold is felt only during about two months. Even at Montreal, in Lower Canada, but in the vicinity of the Upper, the duration of the snow is near two months shorter than at Quebec. This diminution of cold in these countries has been much promoted by the partial destruction of the woods, by which avenues have been opened for the admission of the warm southwesterly winds. Hence, from the extension of colonial settlements, a still further diminution may in future times be expected. Even throughout the lower province the influence of this cause has already become evident, "since the period of the river's being closed against navigation by the ice is near a month later than it was when Canada was first colonized; and instead of insuring vessels on condition of their leaving the river by the end of November, as used to be specified in the beginning

\* Gray, p. 244, 253—256, 282, 299—301, 312, 313. Weld, vol. 1, p. 389, 398.

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of the last century, the clause in the policies is now extended to the 25th December.”\* The heat of the summer in Upper Canada is said sometimes to raise the mercury in the thermometer even above the hundredth degree.

## History.

The discovery of Canada is ascribed to Jacques Cartier, a French mariner, who, in the year 1535, sailed up the great river, to which he gave its name from having entered it on the day dedicated to Saint Lawrence. Of the etymology of Canada, the name of the country, we have no certain account. No permanent settlement however was formed till the year 1608, when Samuel de Champlain founded the city of Quebec, in a situation most judiciously chosen. The growth of the colony was slow, as it was much neglected by the French government, and as the trade for furs, the first great object of the colonists, was fettered by monopolies; beside that the hostilities of the Indians contributed greatly to retard the progress of improvement. This progress was also interrupted by hostilities with the English colonists, who conquered the country in 1629, but restored it on a treaty of pacification in 1632. In consequence of some attention given to its transatlantic subjects, by the court of France, who sent thither a small force to awe the savages in 1662, the colony assumed a more thriving aspect in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Three expeditions, planned for its conquest by the English, in 1690, 1709, and 1711, proved abortive, the two former by the treachery of their Indian allies, the last by the misconduct of its com-

\* Volney's View of the United States, 8vo. London, 1804, p. 151, 210.

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mander, appointed by favouritism, without regard to merit, by the villainous tory ministers of Queen Anne. Though the Canadians escaped a conquest, their condition, after the war which ended in 1714, was so miserable, that many of them were furnished with no other apparel than the skins of beasts, from their inability to purchase the manufactures of Europe: but afterwards, from a long enjoyment of peace with the English colonists and the Indians, the settlement attained a considerable degree of prosperity, inso-much that in the space of forty years it more than quadrupled its population. The Indians had been conciliated by the labours of the French missionaries, who, with ardent and indefatigable zeal, had endeavoured to convert them to the Roman Catholic religion, and by the condescending manners of the colonists, many of whom had intermarried with the savages, and adopted their modes of life. The ambition of the French court, which had formed a bold and insidious plan for the conquest of the English colonies in America, kindled a new war, in which Canada was conquered in 1759 by the arms of Britain. The heroic Wolfe, the British commander, fell at Quebec, in the moment of a victory, by which the contest in that country was decided. The possession of all Canada, resigned by France in the ensuing treaty of peace in 1762, has been since retained by the British crown.

As the parts of this vast country as yet reclaimed by colonial labour are, in comparison of the whole, of trifling extent, the indigenous are still the predominant products. In the countless variety of useful trees, which compose an

Vegetables;



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immense continuous forest, are observed the beech, the oak, the elm, the ash, the pine, the sycamore, the chesnut, the hiccory, the cedar, the maple, the cherry-tree, and the birch, of each of which again different species are discovered. The pride of the Canadian forest is the white pine, which grows to the height of a hundred and twenty feet, with a diameter of four. The oak is accounted excellent, superior to the Scandinavian, yet, in durability, inferior to that of England. As this species of timber is never found otherwise than straight in this country, no knees of ships can be made from it; but the roots of the pine are applied to that purpose. The species of maple, which yields a saccharine sap grows here in great plenty. The sap, extilling from a gash, or hole, made in the tree, and received in vessels placed beneath for the purpose, is boiled till the aqueous parts evaporate. The residuum is a cake of coarse sugar, capable of being manufactured into as fine a sort as that of the cane. Each tree, with management, is capable of furnishing five pounds of sugar annually during twenty years. Two sorts of this tree are found in Canada, the one growing in low or swampy ground, the other in more elevated or dry situations. The juice of the former is more copious, but less rich in the quantity of sugar procurable from it. Among the indigenous fruits are very fine raspberries, which abound in the woods, and sour grapes not much larger than currants. Among the indigenous plants is the ginseng, so highly valued by the Chinese.

The fruits of Europe, as apples, peaches, apricots, and plumbs, thrive to perfection in the gardens, more especially

at Montreal and in Upper Canada. As fine grapes for the table as those of Portugal grow under the protection of frames of glass. Gooseberries, currants, and other small fruits, are in abundance. The soil, generally a loose earth of a dark hue, ten or twelve inches deep, with a substratum of cold clay, has proved very fertile in the kinds of grain which have been cultivated in it, as maize, wheat, oats, and barley : but the wheat alone, which is of an excellent quality, more especially in the upper province, is sown in such quantities as to be an article of exportation. The sort commonly cultivated is that which is called spring wheat, committed to the ground in May, and reaped in August or September. The farmers in the lower province, descended from the French, have as yet been slovenly, both in the neglect of manure, though marl is abundant, and in the cleaning of the grain, when thrashed. The tobacco of this country is esteemed for its mildness, but the quantity raised is very small. The soil is well adapted to the production of hops and hemp. The former have already furnished some small matter for exportation. The latter, the culture of which is encouraged by government, would be highly advantageous to Britain, if its growth should become extensive.\* What may be, in future times, the agricultural products of this great and fertile region, whose colony has not as yet far emerged above an infantine state, we can only conjecture.

\* Weld, vol. 1, 379—388. Gray, p. 150, 151, 198, 205—209.

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## Animals.

The domestic quadrupeds and poultry of Europe have been imported into Canada, and thrive in general. The horses are spirited and remarkably hardy. Dogs, yoked either singly, or in one or more pairs together, are applied to the drawing of carts, and other wheeled carriages, in summer, and sledges in winter. Various sorts and sizes of these animals are used in drawing, each with a weight proportioned to its strength : but the strongest is a particular breed, resembling what is called the dog of Newfoundland, but broader across the loins, and with shorter and thicker legs. The indigenous quadrupeds are in general the same with those of the northwestern regions of America, already noticed ; but here they have been reduced to a comparatively diminutive number, since the establishment of a colony on the banks of the Saint Lawrence, by the indefatigable pursuit of the Indian hunters, for the furnishing of furs and peltry to the demands of European merchants. Sometimes vast numbers of bears migrate from the more northern regions, through Canada, southward, crossing the Saint Lawrence in its narrowest parts, particularly the straits between the vast lakes. This kind of migration is always accounted an infallible prognostic of excessive severity of cold in the ensuing winter. Squirrels also sometimes, in like manner, changing their places of abode, pass through this country in prodigious numbers ; but their course is sometimes northward, as well as in the opposite direction.

Also pigeons, resembling the wood-pigeon of Britain, but smaller, are observed, commonly once in seven or eight years, to migrate from the north to the south, passing over



the Saint Lawrence and the lakes, in numbers so immense as might be thought incredible. Land birds in the woods, and water fowl on the lakes and rivers, in a great variety of species, are seen in vast numbers in summer; but when winter comes, they almost all disappear, as the frost precludes them from the means of subsistence. Among the few which remain in the winter is a species called by some the spruce partridge, by others the pheasant, which procures its food from the spruce fir. This species resembles the British partridge in its external appearance, except, that it is larger; and the British pheasant in the taste of its flesh. These birds are so stupid that, when one of a flock is killed by a shot, the rest remain undisturbed, insomuch that the fowler may shoot several more, perhaps the whole flock, in succession.

Among the reptiles of this country is the rattle snake, from which however Lower Canada is said to be exempt, but which swarms to a very dangerous degree in several parts of the Upper, particularly in the desert islands of the great lakes. The rattle snake here is of two species. The one, seldom longer than thirty inches, is of a deep brown colour, clouded with yellow. The other, nearly twice as large as the former, is of a greenish yellow, clouded with brown. Fish, in vast variety, abound in the Saint Lawrence and the lakes. Among these is the sturgeon, which here is not considered as well flavoured for food, but is valuable for its oil. The salmon swarms in an extraordinary degree. The Indians kill this and other species of large fish, with spears, at night, with the aid of torches.

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Of two in a canoe one steers and paddles, while the other, standing over a flambeau placed in the head of the canoe, strikes dexterously with his spear, the fish which come around, attracted by the light.\*

## Fossils.

In Canada, where the great object must continue to be agriculture, until a more numerous population shall have augmented the demands of the colonists, and furnished workmen for other pursuits, little attention has been given to the exploring of fossil wealth, which appears to be copious, and may in future times furnish large matter for exportation. The ore of iron has been found in many parts, but in one place only has a mine of it been worked. That of copper is abundant in the remote parts of Upper Canada, as about Lake Superior, and in its islands, where it can be procured in vast quantities with little trouble. Even virgin copper, apparently as pure as any which has undergone the usual action of fire, has been seen in great plenty in several of the more eastern of these islands, and on the borders of a river which flows into the southwestern side of the lake. Among the few fossils as yet discovered may be noticed fine pieces of quartz, called also rock crystal, which are brilliant like diamonds, and cut glass in like manner. At Quebec, at Cape Diamond, which received its name from these substances, great numbers might be procured, mostly of a pentagonal form, and terminating each in a point.†

\* Gray, p. 246, 311. Weld, vol. 1, p. 354, vol. 2, p. 43—46, 86, 140, 156, 163.

† Gray, p. 68. Weld, vol. 1, p. 377, vol. 2, p. 71.

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## Commerce.

The commerce of Canada is maintained on one side with the Indians by canoes, and on the other with the British dominions in Europe and the West Indies by ships, beside a considerable traffic with the people of the United States of North America by boats and land-carriage. The trade with the Indians for peltry and furs has been already noticed in my account of Northwestern America. This trade has been chiefly in the hands of an association of merchants, styled the northwest company, whose business is managed by men resident in Montreal. Among the skins imported into the country by their agents, in one year, were a hundred and six thousand skins of beavers, thirty-two thousand of martens, seventeen thousand of musquashes, six thousand of lynxes, four thousand six hundred of otters, and three thousand eight hundred of wolves. The supply of this merchandize must, in course of time, diminish, according to the decrease in the number of quadrupeds by the activity of the hunters. The skins and furs, procured from the Indians of the northwestern regions, in exchange for blankets, guns, ammunition, spirituous liquors, and other articles, constitute a very considerable part of the exports of Canada to Europe. Among a great variety of other exports are wheat, flour, and timber. The imports consist chiefly of manufactured goods of various kinds, such as non-manufacturing colonists must be expected to require. The trade has employed already two hundred ships, containing thirty-six thousands tuns, navigated by about sixteen hundred seamen, and may be expected to employ, at a not very distant time, a much greater number. The only channel of traffic between Lower Canada and the United States of



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North America, allowed by the British government, was the river Chamblee, the outlet of the waters of lake Champ-lain into the Saint Lawrence: but, as a smuggling trade, on so extensive a frontier could not easily be prevented, great quantities of goods have been imported clandestinely.\*

An important article of exportation is timber, in staves or in gross pieces. It is floated down the river to Quebec in rafts, which are variously constructed, according to the various kinds of wood conveyed by them. When oak is to be floated, "a great number of large pieces of pine are strongly fastened together with wooden pins, making a kind of frame in the form of a gridiron. To this frame the pieces of oak are fastened, and thereby buoyed up: for they are so heavy, that they would not float of themselves. These floats, or rafts, are so well put together, that they resist the strong concussions in coming down the rapids; and it is remarkable that there is not a piece of iron about them. Their only fastenings are wooden pins, and twigs and young shoots of trees, of a tough and pliable nature. The cables even, which they use as a fastening to prevent their being carried up the river by the flowing tide, are nothing but young shoots of trees, fastened and twisted together. By these floats not only the oak, both squared and in plank, is brought down, but also staves: and they are of vast dimensions. They are managed and directed by the force of large oars or sweeps, from thirty to forty feet long, having their *fulcrum* near the edge of the raft. The rowers are stationed

\* Gray, p. 172—201. Mackenzie's Tour, Pref. p. 25. Heriot's Travels, &c.

at the proper distance to give effect to their exertions on the *lever* ; and, it must be allowed, a great power is wanted to give a direction to such an unwieldy mass. Fifteen to twenty people are employed on some of them. A house is erected on each of them, in which the people sleep and eat ; for they have cooking utensils, a fireplace, and beds, such as they are. After the wood is sold, the float and house are also disposed of.”\*

Various kinds of boats, some of which are termed canoes, are employed in the carriage of merchandize on the rivers and lakes of Canada. Next to the raft in its nature is the *scow*, “ a vessel with four sides, an oblong square, in length forty to fifty feet, in breadth thirty to forty, and from four to five deep, flat-bottomed. The sides are not perpendicular : they are inclined outwards for the purpose of carrying a greater weight. The scows are built on the lakes in Upper Canada. A large one will carry five hundred barrels of flour, and costs fifty pounds. They are built for the farmers, for the purpose of transporting to Montreal flour, potash, and other goods. They are navigated by long oars, or sweeps, and poles. They have each a mast and sail too, which can be used in the lakes, when the wind is favourable. On such occasions they steer with an oar ; and they have anchors and cables to *come to* within the lakes, when the wind blows strong against them. They are made of pine, planked, and calked outside, like a ship, but have no deck. When they have discharged their car-

Boats.

\* Gray, p. 212.

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goes, they are of no further use, except for breaking up for domestic purposes, and they are sold generally for a very few dollars.”\* Boats called *bateaux*, the French appellation, are much in use on the Saint Lawrence and the lakes. These are commonly about forty feet long, six broad, with the sides about four feet high, flat-bottomed, sharp at both ends, and carry a burden of from four to five tons. They are heavy vessels, awkward in rowing and sailing, but are preferred to boats with keels, as, at the approach of a storm, they can easily be run aground at the beach, and drawn on shore.†

Of the canoes made of bark, employed in the trade with the western Indians, which are also much used within the limits of Canada, I have already given an account in treating of the northwestern regions of America. Canoes of another sort are in use in the Saint Lawrence, made each out of “one solid piece of wood, the trunk of a large tree scooped out, and formed on the outside somewhat like a boat. Some of them are very large, carrying easily fifteen or twenty people. The passing of the Saint Lawrence in canoes, in the middle of winter, where the river is not frozen over, as at Quebec, is a very extraordinary operation. The time of high water is chosen, when the large masses of ice are almost stationary. The canoe is launched into the water, where there is an opening: the people are provided with ropes, boat-hooks, and paddles. When they come to a sheet of ice, they jump out of the canoe upon it; draw

\* Gray, p. 203.

† Weld, vol. 1; p. 332.



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the canoe up after them ; push it to the other side of the sheet of ice ; launch it into the water ; paddle till they come to another sheet of ice ; and proceed as before. You see twenty to thirty canoes crossing in this way at the same time ; and you cannot avoid trembling for them, when you see two immense masses of ice coming together, and the canoes between them, apparently in the greatest danger of being crushed to pieces : but the people extricate themselves with great dexterity.”\*

Of the area of this vast country, of which no accurate survey has as yet been made, we can only form a conjectural, or vague estimation. Its length may be fourteen hundred miles, its medial breadth near two hundred and thirty, and its area little less than two hundred millions of English acres. It is politically divided into the two provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, separated by an imaginary line, which commences at a landmark of stone, on the northern bank of lake Saint Francis, a broad distention of the Saint Lawrence river, at a cove to the west of Point au Baudet, and thence runs northward to Utawas river, and along it to its source, and thence directly to the north to the confines of New Britain. The subdivisions of counties, townships, parishes, and other districts, will increase in number with extending population. The increase indeed in population has been rapid. In the lower province the number of inhabitants was almost tripled in the space of fifty years, after its becoming subject to the British crown.

Area.

Division.

Population.

Gray, p. 257.

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In the upper, the colony, from a very slender stock, grew to such a state, in thirty years, as to consist of about a hundred thousand persons. This in part is ascribable to emigrations from the territories of the United States. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the number of people in all Canada amounted to at least three hundred thousand, of whom about two-thirds were contained in the lower province.\*

## Inhabitants.

In the above-stated estimate, I have not included the Indians, whose numbers are very small, and totally uncertain, within the bounds of Canada. Few tribes indeed of this race of men can properly be said to belong to this country, as the range of territory, through which most of them roam, or are thinly scattered, extends into regions far beyond its limits. Such is the case with the Algonquins and Knisteneaux, already mentioned, who stretch to the west and north; nor can the Iroquois be regarded as other than borderers. A few small clans of aboriginal people dwell in a comparatively settled manner within the Canadian territories; but they are so very inconsiderable as hardly to merit notice. A remnant of the Algonquins, termed mountaineers by the colonists, consisting of about thirteen hundred persons, about half of whom are a kind of nominal christians, inhabit a tract of country which borders on lake Saint John. These, in length of time, have lost, together with the ferocity, all the courage of the savage, having become so unwarlike that they must quickly be ex-

\* Gray, p. 165.

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tiipated by fiercer tribes, if they were not surrounded by the posts of a civilized people. The rest of the characteristics of a savage people they fully retain, as an invincible aversion to agriculture and every regular pursuit of provident industry, and an indolence from which they are roused only by want, for the procuring of subsistence by the chase. Of the colonists, or civilized inhabitants, of Lower Canada, whom alone we regard as forming the population, nearly nine tenths are of French descent, and speak no other than the French language. The remaining part, together with all the people of Upper Canada, are of British origin, and speak English only.

That the use exclusively of the French language in the administration of government, and courts of justice in Lower Canada, has hitherto been sanctioned by the legislative power of Great Britain, seems to have been one of the errors of the British cabinet in the modelling of a political constitution for this country. Two acts of the British parliament, the one in 1774, the other in 1791, were passed for the regulating of the Canadian government. Of this system, which may be hereafter new modelled, I shall attempt to give no more than merely an outline. Two governors preside separately over the two provinces, independent of each other in civil matters; but in military the governor of the lower has the precedence, as being captain general for Britain in North America. Under the governor of each province are two bodies of a kind of provincial parliament, the one termed the legislative council, the other the house of assembly. The members of the former are summoned

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by the governor, and hold their places, unless forfeited by specified culpability, during life. Those of the latter are elected by the freeholders of the several counties and towns, and retain their seats four years, unless their dissolution be pronounced, before the expiration of that term, by the governor, who has power at all times to dissolve their assembly. In Lower Canada the legislative council must consist of not less than fifteen members, in Upper Canada of not less than seven. In the former province the house of assembly must not contain less than fifty members, in the latter not less than sixteen. Except in some cases where the assent of the king, and in some where even that of the British parliament is necessary, laws for internal regulation are made by these assemblies with the assent of the governor, but may, within two years, be annulled by the king. The executive power is vested in the governor, assisted by an executive council nominated by the British sovereign.

In both the provinces the laws of England in criminal matters are established, and in civil also in the upper : but in the lower the old French customs are permitted to retain the force of laws, except in lands granted, since the settlement of the government, in free and common socage, by the king, the inhabitants of which are subject only to English laws, except in certain cases. That these French customs have been established is somewhat unfortunate, as they press too heavily on the lower classes, and as, from their defective nature and their confusion with English laws, a field is opened for the chicane of lawyers for the obstruction of the course of justice, in the recovery of debts, and in

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suits concerning property. The assignment of separate legislatures to the two provinces seems also unfortunate, as thence, in Lower Canada, the French members in the house of assembly have fully in their power, by their great majority over the English, to prevent the enactment of whatsoever bill they may choose to oppose, and, thus enabled, are apt, from their extraordinary ignorance, and inveterate prejudices, to put impediments in the way of the colony's improvement. Beside the great majority against them, the British members are under another disadvantage. They can seldom, if ever, in debate, speak the French tongue, which alone is in use, with such fluency and force as those of whom it is the vernacular speech. The expenses of government in Canada, in the maintenance of civil establishments and military and naval forces, must vary with circumstances, but has always far exceeded the revenue collected from the country. To attach the tribes of neighbouring Indians to the British interest, presents are annually given them, to a larger amount than seems to some consistent with sound policy. The expenses of these presents, together with the salaries paid to officers in what is called the Indian department, have hitherto amounted to a hundred thousand pounds a year.

The professors of every religion have the fullest toleration in this country. The Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the French colonists, the bulk of the inhabitants of Lower Canada, is established by law, so far as that its clergy retain their ecclesiastical properties, and can recover by legal process the dues and tythes which they possessed before the

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conquest, except on lands belonging to Protestants. Tythes are still levied from such lands held by Protestants, as were formerly subject to this kind of rent for the support of the Romish worship; but the amount of them is paid into the hands of a receiver general, for the maintenance of Protestant clergymen of the Church of England, actually resident in the province. For the maintenance of the same the seventh part of all waste lands, granted by the king, is reserved and without a clause of reservation to this purpose no grant is valid. To constitute benefices, and to endow them from this fund, a power is vested in the governor with the advice of the executive council. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the clergy of the Church of England, in both provinces, were only thirteen in number, including the bishop of Quebec; those of the Church of Scotland three; those of the Romish Church two hundred. A late traveller\* says, "no where do the Roman Catholics and Protestants live on better terms than here. They go to each other's marriages, baptisms, and burials, without scruple; nay, they have even been known to make use of the same Church for religious worship, one party using it in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon. There is something truly christian in all this."

Manners.

The Canadians of British blood are, in persons and manners, like other British people, but the French Canadians are of a different character. Of the lower classes of these many appear tinged with Indian blood, and some are still

\* Gray, p. 60.



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found dwelling in the villages of the Indians, and married to Indian women. They are generally inclined to a roving kind of life, apt to prefer the chase, the fishery, and the management of boats in commercial voyages, to the settled business of agriculture. From their resemblance to the aboriginals in such propensities and habits, these have been, and still continue to be, more attached to the French Canadians than to any other European colonists who have settled in America. No bolder navigators, nor hardier men, perhaps are to be found in any country, than those of these colonists who navigate the canoes in the trade of peltry. The smoking of tobacco is incessantly practised by these and others of the lower classes, insomuch that they compute the distances between places by pipes. By a pipe, which is commonly about equal to a Russian verst, or three quarters of an English mile, is meant the space through which they may move while a pipeful of tobacco lasts in smoking. The common people in general are blindly devoted to the dictates of their priests, and superstitious in the extreme. For instance, they believe, that a consecrated candle, while it burns, completely protects all in the house, where it is, from thunder, tempests, sickness, and every other evil.

Consonant with the superstition of the French Canadians is their extraordinary ignorance. Few among this people can write or even read. Strange as it must appear, this is the case with many members of the house of assembly. The little acquaintance with literature discoverable among them is chiefly possessed by the fair sex. The opinions of these are regarded as of such weight, that the men generally con-

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sult their wives in the management of affairs, and are guided by their advice. "Some of the lower classes have all the gaiety and vivacity of the people of France. Others, to appearance, have a great deal of that sullenness and bluntness in their manners characteristic of the people of the United States. Vanity however is the ascendant feature in the character of all of them, and by working upon that you may make them do what you please."\* Their amiable behaviour to strangers must be considered as atoning for many faults. There is not a farmer, shopkeeper, nay, nor even a *seigneur*, or country gentleman, who, on being civilly applied to for accommodation, will not give you the best bed in the house, and every accommodation in his power. The Canadians seem to have brought the old French politeness with them to this country, and to have handed it down to the present generation. One is more surprised to find here courtesy and urbanity, from the little likelihood that such plants would exist, far less flourish, in the wilds of Canada."† Notwithstanding, however, the general politeness of this people, the indolence of the men in the lower orders causes great part of the labours of agriculture to fall to the lot of the softer sex.

Customs.

The customs and modes of life of the Canadians, both French and British, depend much upon the nature of their air and seasons. During the long winter, while the earth continues covered with snow, which in the lower province is not less than six months, all business, except the carrying

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 338.

† Gray, p. 127.

of goods to market, is suspended, and the people devote their time to amusement and festivity. The labouring classes, in great proportion, are thus obliged to maintain themselves the whole year on the earnings of the half: yet they are as well clothed, and appear to live as comfortably, as those of their rank in any country in Europe. The rooms are warmed with stoves, as in Russia, and the cattle intended for the provision of winter are killed at the commencement of that season, and their flesh is preserved from taint by the frost. A species of amusement much practised by the gentry is driving in open sledges on the ice or frozen snow. In these the ladies appear superbly dressed in furs. These sledges, termed "*carioles*," glide over the snow with great smoothness, and so little noise do they make, that it is necessary to have a number of bells attached to the harness, or a person continually sounding a horn, to guard against accidents. The rapidity of the motion, with the sound of these bells and horns, appears to be very conducive to cheerfulness, for you seldom see a dull face in a *cariole*.\* The body of this vehicle, placed on what are called *runners*, which resemble in form the irons of a pair of skais, is of various shapes and sizes, and is applied to various uses; some sorts serving as carts to bring goods to market, others as carriages for travelling or pleasure.

Those who travel on foot in winter in this country use what are called snow-shoes. These are made of a kind of

Travelling.

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 393.



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net-work, fixed on frames, about two feet long, and eighteen inches broad, shaped like the paper kites used by boys. From their extent of surface they sink not deeply in the snow. Those who avail themselves of horses in travelling over ice or snow generally sit in a cariole. Such is the expedition of this mode, that "there have been instances of a single horse having drawn a cariole, with two people in it, not less than ninety miles in twelve hours, which is more than mail-coach rate, with all their changes."\* When two horses are yoked to one of those vehicles, they are placed in a line, the one before the other. The most extraordinary part of Canadian travelling is on the ice of great sheets of water, such as lake Champlain, over which carriages frequently run in the intercourse between this country and the territories of the United States. Weak spots of the ice are apt to give way under the feet of the horses. The animals, in that case, fall into the water, and sometimes drag the carriage and its contents to the bottom with them; but in general the men leap from the carriage on the unbroken ice, and pull the horses out. For this purpose, on the neck of each horse is fixed a rope with a running noose, by the violent pulling of which the animal is strangled. No sooner is this effect produced on these quadrupeds, "than they rise in the water, float on one side, are drawn on strong ice, the noose of the rope is loosened, and respiration recommences. In a few minutes the horses are on their feet, as much alive as ever."†

\* Gray, p. 263.

† Gray, p. 278.

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## Towns.

The towns of Canada are as yet very few and of small size. The third in magnitude, named Trois Rivières, contained only about three hundred houses in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It stands on a bank of the Saint Lawrence, at the influx of a great auxiliary stream, the Saint Maurice, which is so divided at its mouth by two islands, as to display to passing navigators the appearance of three distinct rivers. The only two towns of considerable magnitude, Quebec and Montreal, are situated at nearly equal distances from this, and on the same side of the Saint Lawrence, the northwestern. Montreal lies on the southern end of an island of the same denomination, near thirty miles long and ten broad, at the mouth of the Utawas river. The number of inhabitants may be about ten thousand, of whom the greater part dwell in the suburbs outside the wall of the city, which, being useless since the Indians have ceased to be formidable, has been suffered to become ruinous. The streets are narrow, but regular. Except some built of wood in the suburbs, the houses are of stone, and instead of shingles, are mostly covered with plates of tin, to prevent conflagration. For the same purpose, the doors of many, and the outside shutters of the windows, are covered with sheets of iron.

Montreal.

The present capital of Canada, and most probably the future, is Quebec, most advantageously situated for strength, commercial convenience, and the beauties of majestic scenery. It is built on a vast calcareous rock, the end of a promontary, which contracts the Saint Lawrence to the

Quebec.

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comparatively diminutive breadth of a mile, but forms below this fluvial strait, at the influx of the river Saint Charles, a noble harbour, called the bason, capable of containing, in a commodious manner, above a hundred sail of the heaviest ships of war. The town consists of two parts,, the upper and lower. The upper town stands on the top of the rock ; the lower at its foot. The two parts communicate by a winding street, in which some stairs are cut at the sides for the accommodation of passengers on foot. The fortifications are stupendous, beside that the natural steepness of the rock obviates, in many places, the necessity of walls. The perpendicular height of the rock at Cape Diamond, which forms part of the outline, is at least three hundred and fifty feet, The number of inhabitants is about twelve thousand. The streets are in general, more especially in the lower town, rather narrow and irregular. The houses are mostly built of stone, and are covered with boards or shingles, except a number of the best dwelling-houses and most valuable warehouses, which have a beautiful covering of plates of tin. Quebec, which, from its situation, must be regarded as the key of Canada, and seems intended in future ages for the capital of a great empire, is remarkable for the grand diversified, and beautiful scenery, which the eye commands from several parts of the upper town. " In the variegated expanse that is laid before you, stupendous rocks, immense rivers, trackless forests and cultivated plains, mountains, lakes, towns, and villages, in turn strike the attention, and the senses are almost bewildered in contemplating the vastness of the scene. The river itself, five or six miles wide,



is one of the most beautiful objects in nature, and on a fine still summer's evening it often wears the appearance of a vast mirror, where the varied rich tints of the sky, as well as the images of the different objects on the banks, are seen reflected with inconceivable lustre."\*

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\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 355.



## CHAPTER VI.

## HUDSON'S BAY.

THE mouths of all the rivers in Hudson's Bay, are filled with shoals ; except that of Church-hill, in which the largest ships may lie : but ten miles higher it is obstructed with sand-banks. All the rivers, as far, as they have been navigated are full of rapids and cataracts, from ten to sixty feet perpendicular. Down these the Indian traders find a quick passage ; but their return is a labour of many months.\*

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As far inland as the company have settlements, i. e. 600 miles to the west of a place called Hudson's stone in lat. 53, long. 106° 27, the country is flat ; nor is it known how far to the eastward the great western chain of mountains branches off.†

The sun rises and sets with a large cone of yellowish light. The burting of the rocks by the frost, is altogether terrific. Like many heavy cannon fired together, and the splinters thrown to an amazing distance. All the grouse-kind, ravens, crows, titmouse, and Lapland finch brave the severest winters.

\* Pennant's Arctic Zoology, p. 294.

† Idem, p. 296.



## LABRADOR.

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THE northern part has a strait coast facing the bay, guarded by a line of isles innumerable. The eastern coast is barren beyond the efforts of cultivation. The surface is every where covered with masses of stone of an amazing size. It is a country of fruitless vallies and frightful mountains, some of them of an astonishing height. There is a chain of lakes spread throughout formed not from springs, but from rain and snow. Their water is so chilly, as to be productive of only a few small trout. On those mountains there are thinly scattered a few blighted shrubs, or a little moss. In the vallies there are crooked, stunted trees, pines, firs, birch, cedar, or rather a species of juniper. In latitude 60, on this coast vegetation ceases. The whole shore like that of the west is faced with islands, at some distance from the land. The people among the mountains are Indians. Those on the coast Esquimaux. The dogs of the former are small; those of the latter are headed like the fox. They have a few rein-deer; but use their dogs for drawing.\*

The Labrador-stone, which reflects all the colours of the peacock is found in loose masses.

\* Phil. Trans. LXIV. 372, 386.

## NOVA SCOTIA.

THE face of the country is in general hilly, but not mountainous. It appears to be a lowered continuation of that chain or spine which pervades the whole continent. The land is not favourable for agriculture; but may be excellent for pasturage. The summer is misty and damp. It abounds in extensive forests; but not in large timber, none fitted for large masts, nor even for the building of large ships. Here is an inexhaustible fund of lumber for the sugar plantations. The situation for fishing here is little inferior to that of Newfoundland. Cape George terminates the coast to the east. It is iron-bound, and 420 feet above the sea.

Far from every part of Nova Scotia extends a skirt of land with deep water and fine anchorage. The harbours here form very secure retreats; and the tides in the bay of Fundy are from fifty to seventy-two feet and flow with prodigious rapidity. Hogs perceiving its approach run away, at full speed.





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# VIRGINIA.

*Virginia—Site—Coast—Contour—Rivers—Lakes—Swamps—Springs—Subterranean excavations—Temperature and Seasons—Face—History—Vegetables—Animals—Fossils—Commerce—Area—Population—Government—Division—Religion—Towns—Roads—Bridges—Inns—Inhabitants—Slaves—Literature—Manners—Islands.*

## VIRGINIA, OR UNITED STATES,

UNDER which general denomination, for geographical convenience, are comprehended the territories possessed by the United States of North America, is a region of vast dimensions, but of not accurately determined boundaries, extending from the borders of New Brunswick and Canada, and the lakes Ontario and Erie, southwestward to the frontiers of Florida, and from the Atlantic ocean, westward beyond the river Mississippi, to tracts approximating the Spanish colonies in New Mexico. The settling of the limits of this great portion of the American continent will depend on

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Site.

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south. On the western side, to the banks of the Mississippi, it consists of plains of vast extent, traversed by low ridges in various directions. To the north of the river Ohio, the land, denominated the northwestern territory, forms an immense plain, or gently undulating surface, so elevated as to give source to rivers whose waters are conveyed in opposite directions, some to the south by the Mississippi, others to the north by the Saint Lawrence.\*

## Rivers.

As the highest or middle region of this part of America displays a peculiarity in the arrangement and conformation of its mountains, so also has it some uncommon circumstances by which the courses of its rivers are affected. These, after having flowed, for some space, along the vallies, between the ridges of mountains, in streams parallel to them, turn suddenly into directions transverse to these ridges, through deep gaps, in which they pour their waters, whence they descend into the plains. Appearances strongly indicate, that, in times of antiquity, many vallies in the mountainous region formed vast lakes, the waters of which, in a course of ages, forced passages from their confinement, bursting their way, where the resistance was weakest, through the vast barriers by which they were pent, and thus forming those gaps through which the rivers are now seen to rush with such impetuosity. In this manner appear to have been scooped the channels of the rivers Hudson, Delaware, Susquehannah, Potowmack, and James, which traverse the ridges between the Atlantic and the spinal or properly called Apa-

\* Volney, p. 18—42. See also the Tours of Burnaby, Smith, Chastellux, Weld, &c. &c.

Iachian chain; and such appears also to have been the case with the Ohio, which seems to have pierced the mounds between the spine and the Mississippi. The most remarkable, or at least the most remarked, of the gaps through which the formerly imprisoned waters escape to the plains, is the breach through which the Potowinak runs, formed in the ridge called the Blue mountains, a breach above a thousand feet deep, and near four thousand wide, presenting, in some points of view, a fine object to the eye by the sublimity of the scene, and the mingled beauties of rocks and verdure.\*

The rivers named above, flowing with vast bodies of water, in broad and deep streams, together with several others, form an extensive inland navigation, which has been already much improved by the excavation of canals, and will doubtless, in future times, with the encrease of wealth, be improved much further. Except in some parts where are portages or carrying places, where navigation is interrupted by cataracts or other impediments, these rivers are navigable by boats almost throughout, and those which fall into the Atlantic are navigable by ships of burden far above their mouths, as the Hudson which enters the ocean at Long Island, the Delaware which is received by a bay of the same denomination, and the Susquehannah, the Potowmak, and the James, which disembogue into the gulf of the Chesapeak. Of all these the Potowmak is of the easiest navigation. On this any ordinary mariner, who has once

\* Volney, p. 74—95.



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made the passage, may safely, without a pilot, conduct a vessel, drawing only twelve feet water, from the Chesapeak to the city of Washington, a course of a hundred and forty miles. In the southern parts the rivers which run to the Atlantic are so barred by shoals and sand banks as not to admit heavy ships, except the Ashley, the Cooper, and Savannah, which however are not navigable by large vessels far within land. Among the cataracts of this country I shall only mention that of Cohoz, where the Mohawk river, an auxiliar of the Hudson, falls from the height of fifty feet, over a ledge of rocks which extends in a right line quite across the channel, where the breadth of the stream is three hundred yards. On the western side of the Apalachians, the Ohio, by its great influent or auxiliar streams, affords a most extensive navigation, while itself bears ships, drawing twelve feet water, through a space of above six hundred miles, to the Mississippi, on which such vessels may prosecute their voyage to the gulph of Mexico. Indeed, when all the windings are taken into the account, the length of the navigation, from Pittsburgh on the Ohio to New Orleans on the Mississippi, is reckoned above two thousand miles. In the provinces of Kentucky and Tennessee the soil is of such a nature that the brooks and even considerable rivers, are apt suddenly to disappear, sinking to a stratum of calcareous rock, along which, as on a nearly horizontal floor, they pursue their course in subterranean channels.\*

\* Volney, p. 22—25. Weld's Travels, 8vo. London 1799, vol. 1, p. 62, 63, 275. Morse's American Geography and Gazetteer, &c. &c.

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## Lakes.

The lakes, which lie within the territories of the United States, are so vastly inferior in size to the immense bason of water in their vicinity, on the northwestern quarter, as not to attract comparatively much notice. Yet lake Champlain, which, on one end, receives a stream from lake George, and, on the other, discharges its redundant waters by an outlet to the river Saint Lawrence, is accounted two hundred miles long, and from one to eighteen broad, has a depth of water sufficient for the largest vessels, and contains above sixty islands, one of which is twenty-four miles in length, and from two to four wide. Lake George itself, whose water is supposed to be a hundred feet higher than that of Champlain, is thirty-six miles long, and from one to seven broad. The lakes Cayuga and Seneca, each nearly forty miles long, communicate with each other, and, by an effluent stream, with the great Ontario. This also is the case with some smaller lakes, as the Oneida, and one called the salt lake, whose water is impregnated strongly with salt.

From the nature and position of the ground in many parts of these regions, the waters form bogs of a species called swamps, which are commonly overspread with a very thick growth of reeds, shrubs, and trees, of various kinds. Of these the most noticed is one called the Dismal swamp, situated in the low country which borders on the Atlantic, between Virginia proper and North Carolina, extending thirty miles in length, with a medial breadth of ten, covered mostly with a dense forest of enormous trees which yield valuable timber, and bordered in many parts, especially toward the south, with a kind of meadows occupied by

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reeds, which afford the most nourishing food for cattle. The waters of a canal, cut in this dreary tract, are of the colour of brandy, and accounted rather salubrious than otherwise, which is supposed to be caused by the roots of juniper, or other trees. In the center is a lake or pond, about seven miles in length. Some spaces in the south have been cleared, and are found fertile in rice : but far the greater portion, consisting of an undrainable quagmire, is incapable of culture. For the production of rice, large tracts have been reclaimed in another wide marsh, called also the Dismal, by some the Great Aligator swamp, which lies to the south of Albemarle sound, and contains a lake eleven miles long. In the province of Georgia, on the borders of Florida, is the Ekanfanoka marsh, supposed to be three hundred miles in circuit, forming in rainy seasons a lake, and containing several islands, which are said to be inhabited, and concerning which the neighbouring savages relate some fabulous stories.\*

Springs.

Thermal waters of various qualities are found in the mountainous parts, particularly in those which belong to Virginia proper, as in Botecourt county, where are those which are called the Sweet Springs, held in such estimation for supposed sanative properties, as to be frequented by considerable numbers in summer. Beside several others, are Warm Spring and Hot Spring in Augusta county, at the distance of above forty miles from the above-mentioned, near the sources of the river James. Hot Spring raises the

\* Weld, Morse, Bartram, &c.



mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer to a hundred and twelve degrees at least. Warm Spring, which is much larger, rises in the bottom of a deep valley, shaped like an inverted cone, which shews every indication of having been the crater of a volcano now extinct. The temperature of its water, which is ammoniacal and sulphureous, fills a bason of thirty feet in diameter, and flows in a sufficient stream for the turning of a mill, is measured by the ninety-sixth degree of the same thermometer.\*

Whether by the operations of water, the marks of whose violence are strongly impressed on many parts of these territories, or by those of another element, some strange excavations have been formed, has not as yet been ascertained. Of these the most extraordinary is a stupendous natural bridge, thrown over a frightful chasm, in the county of Rockbridge, in Virginia proper, between Augusta and the river James. "It extends across a deep cleft in the mountain, which, by some great convulsion of nature, has been split asunder from top to bottom; and it seems to have been left there purposely to afford a passage from one side of the chasm to the other. The cleft or chasm is about two miles long, and in some places upwards of three hundred feet deep. The depth varies with the height of the mountain, being greatest where the mountain is most lofty. The breadth of the chasm also varies, but, in every part it is uniformly wider at top than toward the bottom. The arch consists of a solid mass of stone, or of stones cemented so strongly together that they appear but as one. The

Subterranean  
excavations.

\* Volney, p. 40. Weld, vol. 1, p. 219. Morse's Gazetteer, &c. &c.

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height of the bridge to the top of the parapet is two hundred and thirteen feet, the thickness of the arch forty, the span of the arch at top ninety, and the distance between the abutments at bottom fifty. The abutments consist of a solid mass of limestone on either side, and, together with the arch, seem as if they had been chiseled out by the hand of art. A small stream, called Cedar creek, running at the bottom of the fissure, over a bed of rocks, adds much to the beauty of the scene. From the bottom of the chasm the stupendous arch appears in all its glory, and seems to touch the very skies. To behold it without rapture is impossible ; and the more critically it is examined, the more beautiful and surprising it appears.”\* On one side of the bridge is a natural parapet of fixed rocks ; but on the other, where a near approach to the brink is dangerous, no fence is furnished, except trees, which cover in general the arch, and both sides of the chasm. The breadth of the bridge, over the middle of which a road frequented by waggons lies, is from brink to brink about eighty feet.

Of the caverns the most noted is that which is called Maddison’s cave, situate also in Virginia proper, about fifty miles northward of the natural bridge, in a hill of about two hundred feet in elevation, forming on one side a precipice, washed at the foot by a river. In the steep side is found the entrance of the cavern, which extends about three hundred feet into the earth, dividing into two branches, which irregularly descend till they terminate each in a pool of unknown dimensions. The two pools are suspected to com-

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 220—225. See also Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia.

municate with each other and with the river. The height of the cavern is commonly from about twenty to fifty feet, and the sides and roof are of solid limestone. The stalactites in some parts form massy pillars, and in others hang from the ceiling like elegant drapery.\*

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In temperature and seasons this portion of America differs widely from the western countries of the Old Continent between the same parallels, and has this peculiarity, that its maritime lowlands, washed by the Atlantic, are colder than those of the interior, beyond the mountainous region, in the same degrees of latitude. From the contour of this vast country, and its position with respect to the gulf of Mexico and other tracts of water and of land, a most judicious traveller has in great measure accounted for the state of its atmosphere † In the modification of the temperature and weather the winds are the great agents, which are here more general, or blow uninterrupted over a greater extent of surface, than in Europe. Those which here predominate are the northwest, southwest, and northeast; insomuch that, if we suppose the year divided into thirty-six equal parts, "we may say that these three have taken to themselves thirty or thirty-two, the northwest and southwest twelve each, the northeast, with the east, six or eight. The rest are distributed among the southeast, south, and west, since due north may be reckoned almost as nothing." To form a right idea of the temperature of this vast country, we must conceive it to be divided longitudinally, by lines run-

Temperature  
and Seasons.

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 225—230.

† Volney, p. 122—249.



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ning in a direction from northeast to southwest, into three regions, the eastern washed by the Atlantic, the middle or the mountainous, and the western or the valley of the Mississippi.

The Atlantic region, which, except its northern part, is level throughout, or a shelving plain between the mountains and the ocean, resembles, not only in temperature, but even in soil, those parts of China and Tartary which are similarly situated, or between the same parallels. Here the cold of winter and the heat of summer are very sensibly greater, more especially the former, than in the western countries of Europe and Africa under the same degrees of latitude. The territories of New England, situated between the latitudes of forty-two and forty-five degrees, corresponding to the south of France and the north of Spain, are so covered with snow for three or four months in winter, as to render the use of sledges general and habitual. Fahrenheit's thermometer commonly varies in this season between the freezing point and eighteen or twenty-two degrees below it, and sometimes sinks lower to thirty and even forty degrees under that mark. In the same territories, for forty or fifty days in summer, the mercury in this instrument is frequently seen to rise to the eightieth, eighty-sixth, and even ninetieth degree; and few summers pass without its being found sometimes to rise to ninety-nine or a hundred and one, which is the temperature of the coasts of the Persian gulf, or the lowlands of Arabia. In the middle provinces, between north and south, as Pennsylvania, the duration of the cold is less, and that of the heat greater, but the

intensity of both remains nearly the same. The river Delaware, notwithstanding the rising of the tide to the height of six feet, is frozen entirely over, where it is a mile broad, in twenty-four hours, and, except two or three intervals of thaw, continues obstructed about thirty, and sometimes forty days. It has been known to be so frozen in the space of even ten hours, as to bear people to walk across it. For a long time after the summer solstice, and twenty days before it, the heat is so violent, that the streets of Philadelphia are totally deserted from noon till five o'clock in the evening.

In these middle provinces the annual variation between the usual maximums of cold and heat amounts to a hundred and three or a hundred and eight degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, and in the northern to a hundred and fourteen, but in the southern only to seventy-two or seventy-six, as the difference naturally diminishes in approaching the equator, under which it quite ceases to have existence. In even the southern provinces a smart cold is felt in winter, but for four months in summer the mercury of Fahrenheit is commonly at between eighty and eighty-six degrees, and sometimes rises at Savannah to even a hundred and eight. Not only are the annual variations of temperature far greater than in Europe, but also the diurnal, particularly in the middle territories between north and south, as Pennsylvania and Maryland. The changes from cold to hot, and from hot to cold, are great and sudden. The thermometer frequently varies, in the space of eighteen hours, fourteen, twenty-eight, and sometimes, even in a single night, thirty degrees. It has been known to fall even forty-nine degrees

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in fifteen hours, and twenty within an hour and a half. The excessive variableness of the weather is thus described by an American writer.\* “It appears that the climate of Pennsylvania is a compound of most of the climates in the world. Here we have the moisture of Britain in the spring, the heat of Africa in summer, the temperature of Italy in June, the sky of Egypt in the autumn, the cold and snows of Norway and the ice of Holland in the winter, the tempests, in a certain degree, of the West Indies in every season, and the variable winds and weather of Great Britain in every month of the year. In the course of our winters, particularly in January and February, there frequently happen variations from cold to hot, or from hot to cold, by which the health is considerably affected. Similar variations take place in summer, and piercing cold succeeds almost every night to the violent heats of the day.” The physical geographer of this country says,† that what is here stated concerning Pennsylvania “is applicable, with very little difference, to the coast of Virginia proper and the Carolinas.” The changes are less observed on the coast of Georgia, where, from its southern situation, the heat predominates, and where, from the discontinuation of the Apalachian ridges, the temperature becomes the same with that of the western lowlands.

In the Apalachian or mountainous region, the intermediate between the eastern and western, the cold of winter, from the nature of elevated surfaces, is greater, and of

\* Doctor Rush in the American Museum, vol. 7, p. 337.

† Volney, p. 139.



longer duration, and the heat of summer less violent, but varying according to the height and aspect of the ground, than in the eastern or Atlantic tracts: but in the western region, the valley of the Mississippi, where a southwesterly wind, warm and moist, from the gulf of Mexico, prevails ten months in the year, the annual heat is greater than in the Atlantic coast by three degrees of latitude; that is, the temperature, existing under any parallel in the former, is equal to that which has place in the latter in situations three degrees further to the south. This difference of temperature between the eastern and western lowlands has existence only so far as they are separated by the Apalachian ridges, for it ceases both at the northern and southern termination of that chain. The superior warmth of the western region is therefore ascribed in part to these mountains, which in general stop the course of the southwesterly wind, preventing its passage to the eastern coasts. This current of air appears to be in fact a portion of the trade-wind of the Atlantic, which, having rushed into the vast bason of the Mexican gulf, forces thence its way, like the gulf-stream, by its easiest outlet, the vale of the Mississippi, where that of the Ohio somewhat changes its direction. The north-west wind, fraught with sharp cold from frozen desarts and the icy ocean, is supposed to glide, in a diagonal current, over the acrial lake formed by the southwestern in the vast concaves or vallies of the Mississippi and Ohio, to pass over the summits of the Apalachian ridge, and thence to descend into the Atlantic region, the cold of whose portion of the atmosphere is thus augmented.

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Though certain winds are habitually prevalent in this portion of America, their currents are much more inconstant or variable than in Europe. Volney says, "I can venture to affirm that, during a residence of near three years, I never saw the same wind blow thirty hours together, or the thermometer continue at the same point for ten. The currents of air are perpetually varying, not one or two points merely, but from one quarter of the compass to its opposite: and these changes attract notice so much the more, since the alterations in the temperature are as great as they are sudden." The changes in the air from dryness to humidity are not less quick and violent. Though the air is dryer, and the number of fair days much greater, than in the west of Europe, yet the quantity of water which falls in rain, within the year, is much greater. The showers are commonly sudden and prodigiously heavy, and the evaporation extremely quick. The dews are also excessively copious. The air is highly charged with electric matter. Of this, says the same traveller, "storms afford very terrifying proofs in the loudness of the claps of thunder, and the prodigious vividness of the flashes of lightning. When I first saw thunder storms at Philadelphia, I remarked, that the electric fluid was so copious, as to make all the air appear on fire by the continued succession of the flashes. Their arrowy and zigzag lines were of a breadth and length of which I had no idea; and the pulsations of the electric fluid were so strong, that they seemed to my ear and to my face to be the light wind produced by the flight of some nocturnal bird. These effects are not confined to the eye and ear, for they frequently occasion melancholy accidents." People are frequently

killed, and other damages sustained, by the lightning. Hurricanes are most frequent in April and October, and most commonly produced by a northeast wind. "These hurricanes have this peculiarity, that their fury is generally displayed in a narrow space, little more than half a mile broad, sometimes less, and only four or five miles in length. In this space they tear up by the root the trees of the forest, and make openings through the woods, as the sickle of a reaper would in passing over a few furrows in a corn-field." At other times, but these are rare, they traverse the whole length of the continent of North America.

In this vast region, as in the North American continent in general, three seasons only fill the year, as here spring has no place. Though the cold is more severe than in Europe, the winter is more tardy. This season commences not fully, till the middle of December, or a little before the solstice, even in the northern territories, though some intervals of bad weather occur more early. The difference of latitude between the northern and southern territories is so great, a difference of fifteen degrees, that the difference of temperature in every season must be very considerable. In the northern and middle parts, the earth is covered with frost and snow at the brumal solstice. A thaw frequently has place in January, but this is succeeded by a cold more intense. In February the snows are most abundant, and the cold most piercing. March is tempestuous and chilling, with showers of snow; nor, till the beginning of May, even in Virginia proper, is vegetation so revived that the trees of



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the forest reclothe themselves with leaves; "which is the more astonishing, since the rays of the meridian sun are insufferably scorching from the middle of April." Thus from cold to violent heat the transition is sudden, "with the incongruous circumstances of a freezing wind and a scorching sun, a winter's landscape and a summer's sky. When vegetation at length bursts forth, its progress is extremely rapid. Flowers are quickly succeeded by fruit, and this ripens more speedily than with us. When the sun, rising highest above the horizon, heats the whole continent, the northerly winds are repressed by those of the south and southwest. June brings on the most intense heats; July the heats of longest continuance, with the most frequent storms; August and September the heats most oppressive, on account of the calms with which they are accompanied. At length the autumnal equinox again arrives, and the series already stated recommences; thus dispensing to this country, in the course of a complete solar revolution, four months of heat, five or six of cold and storms, and only two or three of temperate weather." The last have place in autumn, which is more serene and pleasant than the other seasons. Some change is found to have been effected in the seasons, however, since the arrival of European colonists in these countries, by the partial destruction of the woods. "The winters are shorter, the summers longer, and the autumns later, but, without any abatement of intenseness in the winter's cold." From the extension of the cause, the clearing of the ground, by an encreasing population, still greater changes may be expected in future times.

When such alterations shall have been effected, the country will display a different face from that which it wears at present. The following is a sketch of the appearance which it exhibited at the end of the eighteenth century. "Such is the general aspect of the territory of the United States: an almost uninterrupted continental forest: five great lakes on the north: on the west extensive savannahs: in the center a chain of mountains, their ridges running in a direction parallel to the sea coast, and sending off to the east and west rivers of longer course, of greater width, and pouring into the sea larger bodies of water, than ours in Europe, most of them having cascades or falls from twenty to a hundred and forty feet in height, mouths spacious as gulfs, and on the southern coasts marshes above two hundred and fifty miles in length: on the north snows remaining four or five months in the year: on a coast of three hundred leagues extent ten or twelve cities, all built of brick, or of wood painted of different colours, and containing from ten to sixty thousand inhabitants: round these cities farm houses, built of trunks of trees, and termed log-houses, in the center of a few fields of wheat, tobacco, or maize; these fields separated by a kind of fence made with branches of trees, instead of hedges, for the most part full of stumps of trees half burned, or stripped of their bark and still standing; while both houses and trees are enchased as it were in the masses of forest, in which they are swallowed up, and diminish both in number and extent the farther you advance into the woods, till at length from the summits of the hills you perceive only here and there a few little brown or yellow squares on a ground of green. Add to this a fickle and

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variable sky, an atmosphere alternately very moist and very dry, very misty and very clear, very hot and very cold, and a temperature so changeable, that, in the same day, you will have spring, summer, autumn, and winter, Norwegian frost and an African sun. Figure to yourself these, and you will have a concise physical sketch of the United States.”\* The vast woods however afford, after the first frosts, a fine object to the eye. “These frosts wither the leaves of the forests, and from this moment their verdure assumes tints of violet, dull red, pale yellow, and *mortdoré* brown, which, in the decline of autumn, imparts to American landscapes a charm and splendour unknown to those of Europe.”

## History.

The early emigrations, from the beautifully cultivated face and mild atmosphere of England, to the American wilderness and its then frightful atmosphere, must doubtless have been caused by motives of no common urgency. The first discoverer of this part of the American continent was Gaboto, called Cabot by the English, a Venetian in the service of Henry the Seventh of England, who sailed along the coast from the vicinity of Newfoundland to Virginia proper. No colony however was sent thither by the English, till the year 1585, when a small settlement was formed by the celebrated Sir Walter Raleigh, at Roanoke, in the present province of North Carolina. The whole of the region, which now constitutes the territory of the United States, was then named *Virginia*, in honour of the great Elizabeth, the *virgin* queen. This appellation, not unbefitting the territory of a

\* Volney, p. 11.



*virgin* commonwealth, the first independent state or sovereignty established by Europeans in the New World, seems still the most proper geographical name to denote this region, as the term United States is not strictly geographical, but in fact political. This attempt entirely failed. The colony returned to England in the following year. Nor were other endeavours more successful, till, excited by the venerable Hakluyt, a clergyman, some persons of rank formed an association for the settling of a colony, and obtained a patent for the purpose from James the First. A body of adventurers, who arrived in the gulf of Chesapeake in 1607, formed the first permanent settlement of English colonists in America. These, however met such discouragement, that they were on the point of returning to Europe in 1610, when Lord Delaware, a public-spirited nobleman, landed with supplies, and renovated their hopes. They founded Jamestown at the mouth of the river James, the oldest English town in the American continent, which is now in a deserted condition.

An enthusiasm for civil and religious liberty, at that time not enjoyed under the English crown, excited emigrations to a part more unpromising in climate and in soil, the part now called New England, but in those days North Virginia. The town of Plymouth in Massachusetts was founded in 1621 by a hundred and fifty English adventurers, who braved all the terrors of the wilderness and its rigorous and morbid atmosphere. The sad hardships and mortality, sustained by these colonists, were not sufficient to deter others, who were animated with a like spirit, from following

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their example. The intolerance of the government of Charles the First so encreased emigration, that, before the end of the year 1630, four other towns were founded in New England, one of which was Boston, since become the capital. The emigrations would have been greater, if they had not been stopped by the tyranny of Charles, who embargoed the ships destined for America, neither suffering his subjects to enjoy liberty of conscience at home, nor to seek it in the wilds of the transatlantic hemisphere. Thus were prevented from bidding an eternal adieu to their native country. Cromwell, Hampden, and others, who were afterwards iustigators of a revolution at home, which deprived this monarch of his crown and life. The enthusiasm for their favourite modes of worship, which prompted the early colonists of New England to encounter the perils and afflictions of such an exile, inclined them to deny, in their new settlements, that toleration to others, the want of which they had found so grievous in the land of their nativity. Hence arose dissentions among the colonists, many of whom removed to other parts of this region, where they established settlements under jurisdictions distinct and separate from that of the original colony. A gloomy spirit of fanaticism, and still far more an unhappy belief in witchcraft, caused a long time distractions in this country, which at length were quieted by a sense of the evil occasioned by the delusion.

As New England was planted by puritanic protestants, so another part, denominated Maryland, in honour of Henrietta Maria, the Queen of Charles the First, received, in the year

1633, a colony of Roman Catholics, who found their situation uneasy in England, where the laws and popular prejudices were adverse to their sect. The leader of the emigrants, who originally consisted of two hundred families, was Lord Baltimore, whose conduct was honourable to the religion which he professed, as, by his liberal toleration of all sects, he rendered the colony prosperous. A small plantation of Swedes, who had made a settlement in the vicinity of New England, became incorporated with one much larger, or more powerful, formed by the Dutch. This was conquered in 1664 by the English, who retained possession, and gave to the acquired territories the names of New York and New Jersey. The colony instituted on the fairest principles was that of Pensylvania, founded in 1682 by William Penn, a celebrated quaker, who, for a debt due from the crown, had obtained a grant of the country from Charles the Second, with ample powers of legislation. Not thinking himself entitled to the property of the land by the royal patent alone, he purchased that property from the aboriginal inhabitants, with whom he entered into a formal treaty. This treaty, says Voltaire, "was the only one ever concluded between savages and christians which was not ratified by an oath, and the only one which was never broken." For above seventy years indeed, or in fact so long as the quakers retained the chief power in the government of Pensylvania, the peace and amity promised in this compact remained inviolate.

Carolina, so denominated from Charles the Second, was, by a charter obtained from that monarch in 1663, planted



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by a society of noblemen and others, who were vested with at once the property of the soil and the political jurisdiction. Though the colony was furnished with a code of laws for its government, composed by the celebrated John Locke, such distractions among the colonists, and such hostilities with the Indians, were the consequences of maladministration, that the interference of the British Parliament was at length found necessary. The proprietors accepted, in 1728, a compensation of twenty-four thousand pounds for the surrendry of their rights: the government of the colony was new modelled: and the territory was divided into the two provinces of North Carolina, and South Carolina, with separate administrations. This was the æra of prosperity to these provinces, which have since improved rapidly in riches and population. A similar fortune attended the plantation of Georgia, so denominated in compliment to George the Second, and colonised under the inspection of General Oglethorpe in 1732. Such dissensions arose from political defects, that the colony was on the point of dissolution, when, in 1752, the grievances of the planters were removed by the British Government, who reformed the constitution on the model of the Carolinas.

The histories of the several colonies afford for a long time little matter which can be at present very interesting, such as wars with the savages, intestine troubles, invasions of some of their charters by the kings of the Stuart race, and the restoration of their liberties in consequence of the British revolution under the auspices of William. From wars between France and Britain arose hostilities between

these colonies and those of the French in Canada. Disputes were at different times adjusted by treaties between the mother countries ; but at length the court of France formed a plan, which was brought near to completion, for the destruction and subjugation of the British settlements in America. This was the forming of a chain of fortresses from the Saint Lawrence river to the Mississippi, which would have confined these settlements within very narrow bounds, and enabled the French to lay them waste, with the assistance of the savages, the entire force of all whose tribes they would thus be empowered to employ. The plan was frustrated by a war, in which the British troops conquered Canada in the year 1759, and annihilated the French power in the North American continent. Unfortunately the British government, whose arms had protected its American subjects, soon adopted, under a new reign, that of George the Third, very arbitrary measures, and turned its arms against these subjects, in a war which terminated in the establishment of the independence of the colonies from every sort of subjection to the king of Britain. These had so prospered under their free constitutions, that their population had encreased to two millions, and was still in a state of rapid progression. The scheme of the British ministry for the abolition of their liberties appears to have been part of a plan for the establishment of despotism over the British nation, which plan became abortive by their successful resistance. The ministerial pretext for the invasion of the rights of the colonies was the raising of a royal revenue from them in addition to that of Great Britain and Ireland.

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These colonies were governed internally by their several assemblies of elected representatives, in which presided governors nominated by his Britannic Majesty, and had never been taxed otherwise than by their own representative bodies, in like manner as Ireland by its own parliament. External taxation, on the system of commercial restrictions, the right of which was not disputed, had been exercised by the parliament of Britain toward these dependent states. "Customs had been imposed on certain enumerated goods, if carried to some other place instead of Britain; and when specific articles, the produce of one colony, were to be exported to another, they paid a duty. To these imposts, considering them merely as *regulations of trade*, and not as *taxes*, the colonies had submitted."

To impose internal taxes on these states, by the mere authority of the British parliament, could never have been the wish of any minister who was wise, and consequently honest. The clear and comprehensive mind of Sir Robert Walpole, the real friend of his country, spurned at the idea. Beside other declarations, he on one occasion thus expressed his thoughts: "I will leave the taxation of America for some of my successors, who may have more courage than I have, and be less a *friend to commerce* than I am. It has been a maxim with me, during my administration, to encourage the trade of the American colonies in the utmost latitude: nay, it has been necessary to pass over some irregularities in their trade with Europe: for, by encouraging them to an extensive growing foreign commerce, *if they gain five hundred thousand pounds, I am convinced, that,*



*in two years afterwards, full two hundred and fifty thousand pounds of their gain will be in his Majesty's exchequer, by the labour and product of this kingdom ; as immense quantities of every kind of our manufactures go thither, and, as they encrease in their foreign American trade, more of our produce will be wanted. This is taxing them more agreeably to our own constitution and to theirs."* This was doubtless the most productive mode possible of drawing a revenue from the colonies. Two millions annually were computed to accrue to the royal treasury from their trade, and this income, from the rapid augmentation of their population and commerce, might doubtless have encreased to an incalculable pitch. So far indeed were the whig ministers of the first and second George from imposing taxes on them, that they procured for them considerable sums from parliament to compensate their services in wars against France.

The merit or demerit of giving commencement to a series of aggressions on the free constitutions of the American states rests with George Grenville, who, previously to his imposition of an internal tax on the colonies, took measures to render them less able than they had been to contribute, by any impost, to the augmentation of the royal revenue. A clandestine traffic had long been maintained between the English and Spanish colonies, to the great advantage of both, more especially of the former, and greatly to the emolument of Britain also, as British manufactures were by this channel conveyed into the Spanish settlements, and large quantities of silver received in return. To this beneficial

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commerce, contrary not to British laws, but merely to Spanish, a termination was put, in 1764, by the minister of king George, who acted on this occasion as if he were an officer of the custom-house for the Spanish monarchy. Under the pretence of measures for the prevention of smuggling, for which he had made laudable regulations in Europe, he stationed a line of armed ships, the commanders of which seized all vessels employed in the prohibited trade with the Spanish plantations. Beside the adoption of this extraordinary measure, an act of parliament was procured for granting of certain duties on goods in the colonies, and a declaration of the expediency of imposing also in them certain duties, by means of stamped paper, which should be rendered necessary in pecuniary transactions. The passing of this declaration into a law was postponed till the succeeding year, that the Americans might have time to offer a compensation for the revenue which such a tax might produce.

These Americans had sustained a tremendous war from the tribes of savages in their neighbourhood, who, after the pacification with France, had secretly entered into a general combination, and had perpetrated the most horrible devastations and butcheries, before they could be compelled to accept a peace. Wantonly deprived, on one side, of their lucrative commerce with the Spanish settlements, and deeply impressed on the other, with a sense of grievous losses sustained from the savages, the colonists were in a state of great irritation. "While such was the state of the public mind in America, while the yell of Indian carnage was yet in their ears, and the smoke of their ruined habitations yet in their

eyes, their rage and despair were further enflamed by the arrival of the British resolutions for imposing taxes. A more unfavourable moment could not have been selected." They saw in these resolutions the first appearance of an extensive plan formed against their liberties and properties. They determined therefore to strike at once at the basis of it "by denying the right of the mother country to impose taxes on the colonies, which, not being represented in parliament, did neither really nor virtually consent to the imposition."\*

Notwithstanding all the dissuasive arts of the colonists, who employed agents to present petitions in England against the proposed taxation, a bill, called the *stamp-act*, was passed by the British parliament, in 1765, for the raising of an internal tax in America. The chief of these agents was Doctor Benjamin Franklin, the planner of opposition to the ministerial schemes of American mancipation. "Bred a printer, this extraordinary man, through genius and industry, regulated and directed by judgement, rose to a high pinnacle of physical discovery. He soon shewed that the mind, which could elicit fire from the heavens, could converge and reverberate the rays of moral and political light."† On the notification of the stamp-act in America, the colonists, from sullen displeasure, were roused into overt acts of violent resentment. Resolutions were formed throughout the states not to import any of the merchandize of Britain

\* Adolphus, Hist. George the Third.

† Bisset, Hist. George the Third.



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until the obnoxious bill should have been repealed. Declarations were voted by the provincial assemblies in condemnation of the impost. So general a combination was formed to prevent by force the use of stamped paper, that none dared to attempt either to distribute or to receive it. Ministers, taking a middle course between two opposite parties, the favourers of liberty and the planners of despotism, procured, in 1766, a repeal of the offensive bill, and at the same time a vote asserting the *right* of parliament to tax the colonies. In the following year duties were imposed on some articles, payable on importation into America. To frustrate this plan the colonists resolved not to import any of these articles.

After various disputes, and a riot at Boston, between the mob and the soldiery, in which a few of the former were killed, tranquillity was in great measure restored by the repeal of the censurable imposts, in 1770, except one very moderate of three-pence a pound on tea, which was retained for the maintenance of the right arrogated by the parliament. Determined always to resist such a claim, the Americans adhered to their former agreements of non-importation with respect to tea, but rescinded their resolutions concerning all the other articles. Great discontents arose in Massachusetts in 1772, and the succeeding year, from innovations in their political constitution, and the discovery of hostile sentiments entertained against them. These discontents were communicated to the other colonies by means of corresponding committees. Amid the general ferment intelligence arrived, that many cargoes of tea were con-

signed from England to the ports of America, under the impost specified above. Measures so effectual were every where taken, that in no place was the sale of this merchandize permitted. Without attempting to land it many ships returned to Europe. Where its landing was effected, it perished unsold in warehouses. At Boston, where the governor consented not to the return of the cargoes to Europe, a mob, disguised in the garb of Mohawk savages, boarded the ships, and committed all the tea to the waves of the ocean.

When all attempts for the taxation of the Americans, by the mere authority of the British legislature, were thus rendered abortive, ministers had recourse to coercive measures, for the attainment of their ends by the terror or force of arms. Boston and the province of Massachusetts were the first objects of ministerial resentment. Bills for this purpose were enacted by parliament; one for the closing of the port of Boston, or the total suspension of the commerce of that city, until it should demonstrate full proofs of its obedience; another for such a change in the constitution of the province, as to abrogate its charter, and to render it virtually subject to the arbitrary will of the king or of his deputy; and a third for the empowering of the governor to send for trial to England any persons accused of murder, or any other capital crime, committed in the execution of the laws. This was in fact a bill of indemnity for all violences perpetrated by the adherents of the crown in the enforcement of obedience. The unexpected intelligence of these proceedings spread astonishment and alarm through the colonies. The punishment

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of one province for having resisted a tax which all had resisted was a manifest indication of danger to all. Deputies from all the provinces, except Georgia, met in general congress at Philadelphia, in 1774, on the fifth of September, to consult for their common safety. They framed a declaration of the principles and objects of their association, a petition to the king and addresses to the people of Britain and the colonies. These were compositions of a masterly kind. "Perhaps never subjects offered to their sovereign an address consisting of stronger and more comprehensive reasoning, with more impressive eloquence."\* The sum of their demands amounted to the restoration of their constitutional and chartered rights; but all their applications were treated with imperious contempt, and an army was sent to Boston for the reduction of Massachusetts, the prime object to ministers of coercion and punishment.

A skirmish at Lexington, in 1775, on the nineteenth of April, between a body of militia and a detachment of the British garrison at Boston, sent to destroy American stores at Concord, was the commencement of a civil war in America of seven years' duration. To give here a narrative of the various events of this unhappy war, unjustly waged by the mother country against her children, comports not with the plan of this publication. Of these I have written a brief account in my history of the British Islands.† The generalissimo of the colonists, in this rueful contest, was George

\* Bisset. † Gordon's History of the British Islands, Great Britain and Ireland jointly, vol. 4, chap. 71 and 72.



Washington, a native of Virginia proper, who had served in the American militia in the war against France, in which he had evinced strong military talents. This leader, like the Roman Fabius, was obliged long to confine his operations to defensive warfare, from the great inferiority of his troops in discipline, equipment, and even in number. He avoided the shock of battle, and, while by various means he impeded the enemy's progress, he endeavoured to preserve his men by retiring from post to post. And indeed nothing can shew more forcibly the zeal of his soldiers in the cause of freedom, and his influence over them, than the hardships to which they were persuaded to submit. "His troops were in a state of such deplorable misery, that sometimes their march, from one place of encampment to the other, might be traced by the blood which their bare feet left in the snow, and hundreds were without blankets," in these distressful movements.

Though consternation, from the successes of the royal arms, pervaded the Americans, the congress, who fled for safety in 1776, from Philadelphia to Maryland, never in the least betrayed any symptom of despondency, but made vigorous exertions for a renovation of the contest, and published an appeal well calculated to resuscitate the spirits of the people. The efforts of the congress were in no small degree seconded by the conduct of the British commanders, who drove by despair to the ranks of rebellion multitudes well inclined to the British government. Above all the atrocious behaviour of the German mercenaries in British pay, particularly in New Jersey, filled with desperation

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those who were willing to reunite with the mother country. Details of the enormities were taken on oath and published by the congress. When those who submitted found their condition worse than that of those who resisted, their minds received a bias repugnant to loyalty. Unwilling to expose herself to war, without a strong prospect of success, yet wishing to embarrass her formidable rival, France had furnished secretly military stores to the Americans, while she made the most pacific professions to the court of Britain. At length, when a fair prospect of a favourable issue was displayed, on the capture of a British army, under general Burgoyne, in 1777, she suddenly concluded a treaty of alliance with congress, which produced, in the following year, a war between France and Britain. Spain, from similar motives, joined in 1779 the hostile confederacy against the British crown, whose forces proved inadequate, in the face of such a combination, to subjugate the colonies. Conciliatory propositions had been repeatedly made to the Americans by Lord North, the prime minister of Britain, which might have been severally effectual, if they had been proposed early enough, before events had taken place which caused their rejection; and now a virtual independence too late was offered to the United States, in federal connexion with the British crown. No situation could, in sober judgment, be more desirable, but they could not with honour, perhaps with safety, violate their recent engagement with France, to which they had been so imprudently driven.

To this cause for the rejection of such advantageous terms of peace might also have been added the then esta-

blished hatred of the colonists to their late sovereign and his partisans, whom they considered as having employed every possible mode of barbarous warfare for their destruction, the burning of their towns, the devastation of their territories, the frightful licentiousness of the ferocious mercenaries from Germany, the instigation of slaves to murder or desert their masters, and the diabolical fury of the cannibal Indians. Of the butcheries perpetrated among the colonists one in particular has stained the British annals with indelible infamy. A band of sixteen hundred Indians and American royalists, denominated tories, invaded the settlement at Wyoming, situate in a delightful tract on the river Susquehannah. Gaining possession of some forts by treacherous promises, and of others by force, they put to death all the inhabitants of both sexes and every age, some thousands in number, inclosing some in buildings which they set on fire, and roasting others alive. They then maimed all the cattle, and left them to expire in agonies; and converted the whole charming plantation into a frightful waste. Such were the deeds instigated by the ministers of a king, extolled to the highest pitch for compassionate clemency, and paternal affection for his subjects. To take vengeance on the Indians several parties of Americans made expeditions through the wilderness, in a considerable degree successful.

After various turns of fortune, when the impossibility of conquest over the American states became too manifest to admit a doubt, their independence was established in the beginning of 1783 by a treaty of general pacification. Both



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Britain and her colonies sustained heavy losses by the war, and the condition of each party, after its conclusion, was considerably worse than before its commencement. Beside humiliating concessions to her old enemies, the French and Spanish courts, and the vast expenditure of blood, Britain added a hundred and thirty millions to her public debt, and suffered an alarming dismemberment of her empire. She was burdened also with the maintenance of some thousands of American royalists, whose properties were confiscated by the governments of the United States for their hostilities against their compatriots. The expense of this to the British nation amounted nearly to ten millions. An independence far less desirable than a free constitution under the British crown, was acquired by the Americans, at the expense of devastations, a national debt of above seven millions contracted in the war, and a great loss of people by the sword, and by the expulsion of the royalists. Their population and riches have since rapidly increased, and wisdom directed their councils, so long as the great Washington, who was elected their chief magistrate, held a governing influence over their confederacy. For the extension of their commerce and agriculture by the possession of the Mississippi and its fertile valley, they acquired the addition of Louisiana to their already vast territorial dominion, by purchase from France, in a treaty concluded in 1803. This country had been discovered by Ferdinand de Soto, a Spaniard, in 1558, and had been very feebly colonized, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by the French, who called it Louisiana, from Louis, the name of their sovereign, and founded the town of New Orleans, its

capital. By a treaty between the courts of Spain and France, from secret motives, in 1763, the dominion of all this territory was transferred to the Spanish crown ; but, forty years after, under Napoleon Buonaparte, it was sold, as French property, to the United States.

The natural productions, the spontaneous growth, of the vast territory of these states, such as they were found by the first colonists, and such as they still remain where the face of the land has not been altered by agriculture, must vary, in a region of so great extent, with the nature of the soil, and temperature of the air. The indigenous trees, composing the primeval forest, which, for the far greater part, still subsists, occasion, by their difference, a distinction or division of this immense wood into three parts, the southern, middle, and northern. The southern forest includes in general the maritime tracts from the gulf of Chesapeak southward, “ on a soil of gravel and sand, occupying in breadth from eighty to a hundred and thirty miles. The whole of this space, covered with pines, firs, larches, cypresses, and other resinous trees, displays a perpetual verdure to the eye, but would not on this account be the less barren, if the sides of the rivers, land deposited by the waters, and marshes, did not intermingle with it veins rendered highly productive by cultivation. The middle forest comprises the hilly part of the Carolinas and Virginia proper, all Pennsylvania, the south of New York, all Kentucky, and the northwestern territory, as far as the river Wabash. The whole of this extent is filled with different species of the oak, beech, maple, walnut, sycamore, acacia, mulberry, plumb, ash, birch,

Vegetables.

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sassafras, and poplar, on the coasts of the Atlantic ; and, in addition to those on the west, the cherrytree, horse-chesnut, papaw, magnolia, sumac, and others, all of which indicate a productive soil, the true basis of the present and future wealth of this part of the United States. These kinds of trees, however, do not any where exclude the resinous, which appear scattered throughout all the plains, and collected in clumps on the mountains. The third district, or northern forest, likewise composed of pines, firs, larches, cedars, cypresses, and others such, begins from the confines of the former, covers the north of New York, the interior of Connecticut and Massachusetts, gives its name to the state of Vermont,\* and, leaving to the deciduous trees only the banks of the rivers and their alluvions, extends by the way of Canada toward the north, where it soon gives way to the Juniper, and the meagre shrubs thinly scattered among the desarts of the polar circle."†

The trees in general, howsoever lofty, are not very gross, seldom exceeding thirty inches in diameter. In the low grounds, however, of Kentucky, and other parts of the western territory, they are found much larger, sometimes eighteen or twenty feet in girth :‡ and in the warm climates of the southern provinces, where splendidly flowering trees and shrubs abound, some species grow to an extraordinary size. The white cedar of the swamps is gigantic. Supported by four or five immense roots or stems, which unite

\* *Verd-mont* in French ; *green-mountain* in English.

† Volney, p. 9—11.

‡ Weld, vol. 1, p. 280.



at about seven feet above the ground, the trunk of this rises eighty or ninety feet, quite straight, and without any branches, except at top, where they form a kind of beautiful umbrella. But the chief ornament of the southern forests is the great magnolia. This rises above a hundred feet in height, with a perfectly straight trunk, supporting a shady cone of dark green branches, with purely white blossoms shaped like roses, which are succeeded by crimson cones containing red seeds. Among the indigenous products of the soil are the candleberry myrtle and the sugar maple. From the seeds of the former arises, by being boiled, to the surface of the water, a scum of a greenish colour, which, when purified, is of a middle nature between tallow and wax, serving for the making of excellent candles, and for other purposes still more valuable. The latter is a tree of about the size of the oak, the saccharine sap of which, procured by extillation from incisions made for the purpose, yielded sugar by evaporations, in like manner as the juice of the saccharine cane. But neither the quantity of sugar obtained from this tree, nor of tallow from the myrtle, is sufficient for its becoming an article of export, or even to supply the consumption of the inhabitants. Vines of various sorts are spontaneous and in plenty. One species, quite like the vine which bears the common grape, is of so poisonous a nature, as to blister the skin, when touched in the morning while moist with dew.

The species of indigenous plants are extremely numerous, but require not here particular notice. Beside cotton and tobacco, and indigo in the south, the chief object of agri-

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culture is corn of various kinds, as wheat, barley, maize, and rice, the last in the Carolinas chiefly and in Georgia. Tobacco, the favourite plant of Virginia proper, is much less cultivated now than formerly, since the crops of wheat have been found more profitable. To clear the land from wood, and to render it arable, the practice in these regions is as elsewhere, to burn the timber, and to convert its ashes to manure. To exhaust the vegetative powers of the soil by the incessant culture, without a renovation of manure, and then to leave it waste in a state of sterility, has formerly been, but is not quite so much now, the custom. The lands thus abandoned, remain almost bare, or covered with useless herbs, such as a kind of coarse grass or sedge, which is wholly rejected by cattle, and which turns yellow at the approach of winter. The fruits are mostly of the same kinds as in Europe, but, except where they are carefully cultivated in gardens, they are not of such quality as to deserve much praise, as the peaches, for instance, which are small and little succulent. In comparison of the English, the American farmers are accounted slovenly, insomuch that, even in Pennsylvania, one of the most agricultural provinces, a farmer is said not to raise more from two hundred acres than one in the well cultivated parts of England from fifty.\* In Virginia proper, and the provinces situate farther southward, the works of the fields are performed by slaves. Among these are many, on the estates of some planters, who are employed in handicraft works, such as those of carpenters, tanners, and wheelwrights.

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 112, 113.

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## Animals.

The cattle and other domestic animals of Europe have been imported into the territories of the United States, and are long naturalized in them. Of the indigenous kinds, which are noticed in my accounts of Northwestern America and of Canada, some have disappeared, and some have become scarce, according to the extension of agriculture, and the destruction made by hunters. The deer, which had become comparatively few, have begun to increase again in the woods of this region, particularly in the province of New York, where laws have been enacted against the wanton waste of these quadrupeds, since the venatic savages have abandoned these territories, and retired far westward. The wild fowl, particularly on the great rivers, are vastly numerous, and excellent as food, especially a species called the white duck or canvass-back, which is eagerly sought by epicures. Snipes are seen in prodigious numbers in the marshes. Immense flights of wild pigeons pass sometimes here as in Canada. The turkey buzzard, a kind of vulture which devours putrid carcases, is, on account of its utility in that respect, taken under the protection of law in Carolina. The birds are in general quite different from those of Europe, though many of them have received the same appellations from English colonists. Thus a bird, called a partridge, from a similitude of its appearance, has the size of only a quail. The singing birds in Virginia proper are accounted the finest in America. "The notes of the mocking bird, or Virginian nightingale, are in particular most melodious. This bird is of the colour and about the size of a thrush, but more slender. It imitates the song of every other bird, but with increased strength and sweet-



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ness. The bird, whose song it mocks, generally flies away, as if conscious of being excelled by the other, and dissatisfied with its own powers."\* On the whole amount, however, the feathered tribes in these forests are inferior to the European in melody. Some are highly brilliant in plumage, as the blue bird, of about the size of a linnet, and the red bird, which is less than a thrush, and is of a vermillion hue, with a tuft on its head. A bird called whipperwill, from its loud and plaintive cry, resembling that articulate sound, which it begins at the dusk, and continues through the greater part of the night, is so extremely seldom seen, that some have imagined the noise to proceed from some species of frog, and not from any animal of the feathered kind.

The frogs of this country are of various sorts and make various kinds of noises ; some absolutely whistle, while the loud croaking of others is like the cry of a calf. This loud sound proceeds from the bull frog, which grows to the length of seven inches, and moves with great agility, making leaps of prodigious length. The serpents are also in great variety. Some species are harmless, as the black snake, which is often six feet long, but very slender, and some beautifully variegated sorts, as the ribbon snake, the garter, and blueish green. Some are venomous, as the rattlesnake and the mocassin. The poison of the latter, called also the copper snake, is found less subtle than that of the former, yet is mortal, without proper care. Among the insects is the fire-fly, which illuminates the nights in summer, in the sou-

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 195.

thern parts. To the indigenous tribes of this numerous class of animals have been added some by accidental or designed importation. Thus the weevil, a species of moth, formerly unknown, has committed great havoc in corn in the latter part of the eighteenth century, in the maritime tracts, as also the Hessian fly, supposed to have been imported in the baggage of the German mercenaries, in the war waged for the subjugation of the British colonies in America. Of a very different character is the bee, which appears to have been designedly carried here from the ancient continent. Of the countless tribes of aquatic animals, which swarm along the coast and in the rivers, I shall mention only one, the oyster, which abounds in the streams of fresh water. These oysters, until they have undergone the action of fire, are unpalatable to Europeans; while those of Europe are not, in any state, well relished by the Americans.

This region in general seems far from deficient in a variety of minerals and other fossils; but iron as yet is the only metal which has been drawn in great quantity from the bowels of the earth. The ore of this metal, which in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia proper, is found extremely tough, and fit for casting, for the making of cannon and other purposes, is procurable in abundance, without much trouble, at little depth beneath the surface. Mines of lead, copper, and other minerals, have also been discovered, but not extensively worked. Vast and numerous beds of coal, stores for the use of future generations, lie at present mostly neglected, as wood, which is so abundant, is preferred for fuel. Fossil salt and saline springs are copious

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in many parts. Stone for building and other purposes is procurable in general with convenience in sufficient plenty. According to the kind which forms the substratum of the soil in different parts, the territory of the United States is distinguished into different regions.\* The granitic region, where "the soil rests on beds of granite, which forms the skeletons of the mountains, and admits beds of a different nature only as exceptions," extends from Long Island to the mouth of the Saint Lawrence, and from the coast between these limits to Lake Ontario. The region of sandstone comprehends the mountainous country, from the rivers Mohawk and Hudson, and the sources of the Susquehannah, southward to the northwestern angle of Georgia. The calcareous region, where the soil is found to rest on an immense stratum of limestone, occupies the land from the Tennessee to the Saint Lawrence, between the mountains and the Mississippi. A stratum, or low ridge, of talky granite, foliated stone, or Muscovy glass, from two to six miles broad, and nearly five hundred long, runs in a direction parallel, to the coast, from the banks of the river Hudson to North Carolina. "This ridge every where marks its course by the falls which it occasions in the rivers, on their way to the ocean; and these falls are the extreme limits of the tide:" but it is chiefly remarkable for being the line of separation between two regions, that of marine sand and that of alluvious soil. The former, in breadth from thirty to a hundred miles, between the ridge and the Atlantic, consists chiefly of the substance from



which it takes its name. The soil of the latter, between the ridge and the mountains, is composed of various substances, which appear to have been carried from the highlands by the rivers.

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The commerce of these regions has been, and may probably long continue to be, rapidly progressive, with the progress of population, and the extension of agriculture. The articles of export chiefly consist of the produce of the forests, of the mines, of the cultivated farms, and of the fisheries, beside the peltry obtained in traffic from the savage tribes who inhabit vast wilds in the west. Thus we find these articles principally to be timber in various forms, bark for tanning and dying, pitch, tar, turpentine, potashes, iron in pigs and bars, wheat, maize, rice, tobacco, live cattle, beef, pork, dried and pickled fish, and skins and furs of various quadrupeds. The value of the exported articles, produced within the territories of the United States, amounted, in the year 1803, to above forty millions of dollars; and that of the articles of foreign produce to above thirteen millions. The values of both had in 1801 been greater, more especially of the latter, which had even exceeded forty-six millions: but the trade encreased afterwards, insomuch that in 1806, the exports exceeded in value a hundred millions of dollars, or twenty-five millions of British pounds. The imports consist chiefly of various manufactured goods from Europe, sugar and other products of the West Indian regions, tea and other merchandize of southern Asia. The annual value of the imports from the British Islands alone had arisen to twelve millions of pounds, before the traffic was interrupted by

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political disputes, early in the nineteenth century. The tunnage of shipping employed in the commerce of the United States amounted in 1801 to above a million of tuns, of which not quite a hundred and fifty-eight thousand were the property of foreigners. To what state it may arise in future ages, we cannot pretend to calculate with certainty, when the immense territory belonging to the United States shall have been furnished throughout with inhabitants.

Area.

This territory extends above eleven hundred miles in length, since the acquisition of Louisiana, and perhaps still more in its greater breadth, if its western limits were determined, and contains an area of about a million of square miles, or six hundred and forty millions of English acres. The population is ill proportioned to so vast an area, which is for the far greater part entirely waste or very thinly peopled. The best inhabited parts are the province of Massachusetts and others of New England, the southern territories of New York, the interior of New Jersey, and the southeastern tracts of Pennsylvania. In these on an average the population may be estimated at near eighty persons to the square mile, or at the rate of about forty acres to each family. The whole amount of the population, or number of persons subject to the government of the United States, was estimated in 1804 at above five millions and nine hundred thousand, and may doubtless since be supposed six millions. Of these above a million were blacks and mulattoes, or people of colour, and of this number above a tenth were freemen, the rest slaves. Still within the territories regarded as under the dominion of this government are several tribes of

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savages, conjectured, toward the end of the eighteenth century, to consist of sixty thousand persons, but continually diminishing in number from causes assigned elsewhere.

## Government.

The division of the vast country of the United States is immediately connected with its government. In the revolutionary war, in the defence of the colonial constitutions against the aggression of the mother country, affairs were conducted by a provisional administration, under the direction of a congress, and not till the year 1789 was a permanent system established. The government thus constituted is a republic, composed of a number of confederate states, each of which is separate and independent in its own internal administration. The sovereign power is vested in a president and two councils. The superior is called the senate, the inferior the house of representatives. The former consists of members elected for six years, two from each state; the latter of members elected for two years, each representing from thirty-three thousand to fifty thousand people, according to the progress of population. The executive power is committed to the president, the suprememagistrate of the confederacy, elected for four years by a majority of electors nominated for the purpose by all the states severally. He can pardon offences, except in cases of impeachment, but cannot form treaties with foreign potentates without the consent of two-thirds of the senators, who are also to advise in the appointment of ambassadors. A vice-president is also chosen, to supply, in emergencies, the president's place. The great outlines of this government, only rendered more democratical, are taken from that of England, as also the laws in general:



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but these in some degree vary in the different states, each of which has its particular provincial constitution, governed commonly by a senate and house of representatives, elected every year. The judicial function is performed by one supreme court of justice, and others of a subordinate rank, and judges are appointed during good conduct. The city of Washington, in the district of Columbia, a district belonging to no particular state, but to the whole confederacy in common, has been chosen for the residence of the president, and the seat of the federal government. The forces of the confederacy, military and naval, must vary with circumstances, as also the revenue, the gross amount of which has been stated at above twelve millions of dollars in 1802, but at little more than ten in the following year, at the rate of about four shillings and six pence to the dollar. The national debt may soon much exceed twenty millions of British pounds.

Division.

The number of states composing this confederacy is liable to be augmented, according as the government, in the increase of population, may constitute new states, by conferring that honour on such provinces as may have become sufficiently populous to merit that consideration. In the revolutionary war the number of states was only thirteen; but some have since been added, and others have grown into a state of admission, so that we may reckon them at eighteen. These are Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Northwest territory, Maryland, Virginia proper, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, South

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Carolina, and Georgia. The six first of these are comprehended under the general denomination of New England. The modes of subdivision are not the same throughout the states. Those of New England in general, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, are subdivided into counties and townships; and most of the townships in New England, are again subdivided into parishes and precincts. The territories of the states which are situated to the south of Pennsylvania, are generally divided into counties only. The parts into which the lower country in South Carolina is divided are parishes, which are nearly of the same nature as counties elsewhere. The division into parishes, which was originally ecclesiastical, cannot be expected now to be regularly maintained throughout a country in which no national church exists; for here all modes of faith and worship are quite in a state of political equality, the followers of none being excluded by law from offices in the administration. The sects are numerous; each supports its own clergy: and all maintain the same degree of concord as if they were members of one church. Doubtless they are all members of the church of Christ, except some deists and a small number of Jews.

Religion.

A territorial subdivision into townships, incorporated districts, with or without towns, has place in the northern states. As town and township in these countries are synonymous terms, a European traveller may be often disappointed in his expectation of meeting with a town, where only some scattered habitations can be seen. Many towns within the dominion of the United States are as yet in their infancy,

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while some have arrived at the summit of their advancement, and some have fallen into a state of decline. In general those which are so situated, as to have a navigable communication at once with the ocean and the interior country, are progressive in population and wealth ; while those which have a less favourable situation are in a stationary or retrograde condition. Thus Williamsburgh, formerly the capital of Virginia proper, is falling to decay, while Richmond and Norfolk, more especially the latter, are augmenting rapidly. Many instances might be given ; but to be minute in the account of towns, in a country where changes are in such quick progression, that a totally different state of affairs may be expected in a time not far distant, seems not expedient. I shall particularize a few, in the condition in which they stood at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Boston.

Boston, the chief city of New England, in the county of Suffolk, and state of Massachusetts, is seated on a small peninsula, at the bottom of Massachusetts bay. With the exception of two or three streets, it is irregularly built, but displays a handsome prospect to spectators in the harbour, from which it rises in amphitheatric form, adorned with spires, which are overtopped by a monument, commemorative of the revolution, on the highest spot, called Beacon-hill. The number of its inhabitants has been estimated at from near fifteen to near nineteen thousand. Its harbour is excellent, capable of containing five hundred ships in safety, but of so narrow an entrance as hardly to admit more than two abreast. From the want however of a navigable com-



munication with the interior country, this city, one of the oldest in the United States, encreases very slowly in trade and population.

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New York, the second city of the United States in population and commercial wealth, stands on the southwestern angle of York Island, an insular tract, fifteen miles long, but not two in breadth, at the mouth of the Hudson river, washed also by the waters of the strait which separates Long Island from the main. With some exceptions, particularly a street called Broadway, which extends, with a breadth of near seventy feet, due northward almost from shore to shore, this town is irregularly built and incommodious with narrow lanes ; but by its vast extent of navigable intercourse with the interior country, by the river Hudson, and other conveniences, it increases so much in wealth and population, and, in consequence of the former, improves to such a degree in the taste of the builders, that the additional parts are on a much better plan. Its inhabitants appear to have exceeded forty thousand in number at the commencement of the nineteenth century. The roofs of the houses, which are generally built of brick, are mostly covered with tiles. Here no bason forms a harbour ; but the river, and the shelter of the Long Island, afford sufficient accommodation to shipping.

New York.

The greatest city as yet in all the territory of the United States is Philadelphia, the capital of Pensylvania, situate between the rivers Delaware and Skuylkil, five miles above their conflux, founded by William Penn in 1683. The

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space planned, by the founder, for the groundplot of the city was a rightangled parallelogram, two miles long and one broad, extending to the banks of both rivers ; but succeeding generations have so widely deviated from this plan, that the dwellings extend near three miles along the Delaware, and nowhere more than to the distance of a mile from its bank ; and a part, called water-street, has been built along the river, between the bank and margin, in so low a situation as to have, by neglected filth, generated malignant distempers. The houses, which stand outside the original groundplot, are said to be in the liberties, as they are exempt from the jurisdiction of the corporation. In the liberties the streets are very irregular : but in the city, according to the projector's design, they all intersect one another at right angles, and are from fifty to eighty feet broad, except the principal one, which is a hundred feet wide. They are tolerably well paved with pebble stones in the middle, and with bricks for footways at the sides. Except a few of wood, the houses are of brick, but very few are elegant. With very little exception, the public buildings are heavy tasteless piles of red brick, ill according with the blue marble, with which they are ornamented. The population of Philadelphia may have encreased to above fifty thousand, and may still encrease to a much greater pitch, from its advantageous position on the Delaware, which is navigable to this city by ships of war of seventy-four guns, by sloops thirty-five miles higher, and by boats of nine tuns a hundred miles still farther, beside an extensive navigation on the Skuylkil.

The greatest town in Maryland, though not accounted the capital, is Baltimore, which from an assemblage of some huts of fishermen, grew in thirty years into a population of sixteen thousand, and doubtless now contains above twenty thousand persons. The river Patapsco, on which it is situated, and which falls into the Chesapeak inlet, forms a harbour called the bason, capable of holding within it two thousand merchant vessels, but ships mostly stop, for greater convenience of wind and depth of water, at a place termed Fell's point, above a mile lower, where has been founded another town, encreasing fast in magnitude. The public buildings in Baltimore are mean, as are also the greater part of the private houses, which are mostly, however, constructed of brick : but the plan of the town is good, resembling that of Philadelphia. The streets intersect mostly at right angles, and are from forty to sixty feet broad, beside that the principal one is near eighty : but some are not paved, and consequently not clean.

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Baltimore.

Alexandria, seated on the southern bank of the river Patowmac, in Virginia proper, is at present small, but expected to be of considerable magnitude in future times, from the advantages of its situation, whence it was originally denominated Belhaven. It is as yet remarkable only for its extraordinary neatness in comparison with other towns in these countries. The houses are mostly of brick, and many of them extremely well built. The streets intersect one another at right angles, are well paved, and commodious.

Alexandria.



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## Washington.

Washington city, thus named from the great leader of the revolutionary American troops, intended for the seat of government of all the United States, and thence also denominated the federal city, is in a situation most happily chosen, as being central between the northern and southern tracts, and convenient for a navigable communication with the Atlantic, and an immense extent of country. It is seated on the Potomac, in the fork formed by that great river with what is called its eastern branch. The plan of this town, which is as yet in its infancy, but promises to be, in some future age, one of the greatest and most magnificent in the world, has been maturely studied, and is supposed to be superior to that of any other hitherto in existence. The streets, from ninety to above a hundred feet broad, cross one another at right angles; beside which are to be avenues, a hundred and sixty feet wide, intersecting the streets obliquely, and hollow squares, at the mutual intersections of these avenues, destined for the reception of future monuments or decorations. Among the public buildings are the capitol, or house of congress, the parliament-house, as it were, of the United States, founded in a central spot, the highest in the city; and, a mile and a half from this, the palace of the president, also in a commanding, and most beautiful situation.

## Charlestown.

Charlestown, the capital of South Carolina, stands at the confluence of the rivers Ashley and Cooper, whose streams united form a capacious harbour. The ground plot is flat and low, and the water brackish; yet from ventilation of sea-breezes and from cleanliness, the air is accounted

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wholesome. The streets, from about thirty-five to sixty-six feet broad, in general, are tolerably regular. The houses are in great part neat, built of brick, and covered with tiles. The number of inhabitants, which has probably since increased, amounted, toward the close of the eighteenth century, to between sixteen and seventeen thousand, of whom nearly eight thousand were slaves.

In a country as yet containing so few towns of considerable magnitude, and situated at so great distances asunder, the roads cannot be expected to be in general good. They are mostly indeed in very bad condition, particularly in low soft grounds, called bottoms, where they are often formed, as in Russia, of trunks of trees, laid transversely, side by side, which are apt to sink into the yielding soil, or to break by the repeated attrition of the wheels of waggons. Nor in general are the bridges in much better plight than the roads.

Roads.

The bridges are mostly of wood. Many of them, covered with loose boards, totter under the carriages which pass over them. Some of a floating kind are well contrived, of which we find three in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, over the river Skuylkil. "The floating bridges are formed of large trees, which are placed in the water transversely, and chained together. Beams are then laid lengthways upon these, and the whole boarded over, to render the way convenient for passengers. On each side there is a railing. When very heavy carriages go across these bridges, they sink a few inches below the surface of the water; but the

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passage is by no means dangerous. They are kept in an even direction across the river by means of chains and anchors, in different parts, and are also strongly secured on both shores. Over that part of the river where the channel lies, they are so contrived that a piece can be removed to allow vessels to pass through. These bridges are frequently damaged, and sometimes entirely carried away, during floods, at the breaking up of the winter, especially if there happens to be much ice floating in the river. To guard against this, when danger is apprehended, and the flood comes not on too suddenly, they unfasten all the chains, by which the bridge is confined in its proper place, and then let the whole float down with the stream to a convenient part of the shore, where it can be hauled up and secured.”\* Bridges supported by boats are also in use, like that of Rouen in France, as at Richmond in Virginia proper, over the river James.

Inns.

Travellers are not better accommodated with inns than with roads and bridges. “The mode of conducting them is nearly the same every where. The traveller is shewn, on arrival, into a room which is common to every person in the house, and which is generally the one set apart for breakfast, dinner, and supper. All the strangers, who happen to be in the house, sit down to these meals promiscuously, and, excepting in the large towns, the family of the house also forms a part of the company. It is seldom that a private parlour, or drawing-room, can be procured at any

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 33.



of the taverns, even in the towns; and it is always with reluctance that breakfast or dinner is served up separately to any individual. If a single-bed room can be procured, more ought not to be looked for; but it is not always that even this is to be had, and those, who travel through the country, must often submit to be crammed into rooms where there is scarcely sufficient space to walk between the beds.”\* Often also “at each house there are regular hours for breakfast, dinner, and supper; and if a traveller arrives somewhat before the time appointed for any of these, it is in vain to call for a separate meal for himself: he must wait patiently till the appointed hour, and then sit down with the other guests who may happen to be in the house.”†

Descendants all of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, except an admixture, small in proportion, of colonists from some other European countries, mostly from Germany, the people of the United States are almost wholly English in persons, language, manners, and customs. The deviations from this standard are slight, the consequences of local and political causes. They seem to be in general of shorter lives than Europeans, and are almost universally subject to a very early decay of the teeth. The former may in great measure arise from the great and sudden changes of temperature in the air, which cause repeated colds and coughs, debilitating the frame. The latter is attributed, and both seem in a considerable degree attributable, to the constant use of salt meat for food, the indigestions occasioned by too

Inhabitants.

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 28.

† Idem, vol. 1. p. 41.

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frequent eating, and the drinking of tea and other liquids in a hot state. Local differences, however, have place among them. Thus in the lowlands of Virginia proper, the Carolinas, and Georgia, the lower classes of people have a sallow complexion and sickly aspect; while in the northern territories and the highlands throughout, more especially the latter, they are florid and of a healthy appearance. Beside the descendants of Europeans, two other kinds of people inhabit the territories of the United States. Indians and Negroes. The former very few, and becoming annually still fewer, are elsewhere described. The latter, very numerous in the southern provinces, not in the northern, are partly freemen, but mostly slaves.

Slaves.

The slaves are differently treated according to the different disposition of their owners and the situations of affairs. In Virginia proper, "the slaves on the large plantations are in general very well provided for, and treated with mildness. Their quarters, the name whereby their habitations are called, are usually situated one or two hundred yards from the dwelling house, which gives the appearance of a village to the residence of every planter. Adjoining their little habitations they commonly have small gardens and yards for poultry, which are all their own property. They have ample time to attend to their own concerns, and their gardens are generally found well stocked, and their flocks of poultry numerous. Beside the food which they raise for themselves, they are allowed liberal rations of salted pork and Indian corn. They are forced to work certain hours in the day: but, in return, they are

clothed, dieted, and lodged comfortably, and saved all anxiety about provision for their offspring. Still, however, as long as the slave is conscious of being the property of another man, who can dispose of him according to the dictates of caprice, particularly amid people who are constantly talking of the blessings of liberty, he cannot be supposed to feel equally happy with the freeman. What is here said respecting the condition and treatment of slaves appertains to those only who are upon the large plantations in Virginia proper. The lot of such as are unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the lower class of white people, and of hard taskmasters in the towns, is very different. In the Carolinas and Georgia, again, slavery presents itself in very different colours from what it does even in its worst form in Virginia proper. It is no uncommon thing there to see gangs of negroes staked at a horse race, and to see these unfortunate beings bandied about from one set of drunken gamblers to another, for days together. How much to be deprecated are the laws which suffer such abuses to exist! Yet these are the laws enacted by a people who boast of their love of liberty and independence, and who presume to say, that it is in the breasts of Americans alone that the blessings of freedom are held in just estimation.”\*

This furnishes an idea, far from favourable, of manners in the southern provinces. In fact the use of slaves, wherever it prevails, is observed to contaminate the morals of the people; nor can literature be supposed to have extensive

Literature.

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 142—151.



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influence in such a state of society. The use of letters indeed, so far as the reading and writing of the English language, is almost universally diffused, especially in the northern parts, and books in abundance are procurable from England. Yet literature, comparatively with Britain, was in a very low state at the conclusion of the eighteenth century. The colleges deserved rather the title of grammar schools, and were in every respect very mean and poor.\* These, however, have since increased in number and in merit. Academies have been established, whose discoveries and observations are regularly published. Information is much diffused by magazines and newspapers, though doubtless of inferior value, as in the British Islands; and with growing wealth and population, where the press is quite free, we may expect a growing knowledge and taste in literature.

Manners.

In manners the inhabitants of these countries, denominated collectively Anglo-Americans, are as yet much inferior to the people of the British Islands, as being in a state of society more immature. This difference is much more conspicuous in the lower than in the higher classes, and more in some provinces and cities than in others. Society may be naturally expected to improve, and future ages to present a picture different from the present; but we can only state affairs as they are described in our own times, or at least toward the commencement of the nineteenth century. In politeness, hospitality, and the pleasures of conversation

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 167, 168, 259.

and social intercourse, the gentry of Philadelphia are accounted the most deficient. Here, "among the uppermost circles, pride, haughtiness, and ostentation are conspicuous. In the manners of the people in general there is a coldness and reserve, as if they were suspicious of some designs against them, which chills to the very heart those who come to visit them. In their private societies a *tristesse* is apparent, near which mirth and gaiety can never approach. It is no unusual thing, in the genteelest houses, to see a party of from twenty to thirty persons assembled, and seated round a room, without partaking of any other amusement than what arises from the conversation, most frequently in whispers, which passes between the two persons who are seated next to each other. The party meets between six and seven in the evening: tea is served with much form: and at ten, by which time most of the company are wearied with having remained so long stationary, they return to their homes. Still, however, they are not strangers to music, cards, or dancing. Their knowledge of music, indeed, is at a very low ebb; but in dancing, which appears to be their most favourite amusement, they certainly excel."\* This doubtless is not in unison with the system of the quakers, the founders of this city and colony: but the population is so altered by the influx of other sects, that quakers now constitute hardly a fourth part of the inhabitants.

The conduct of affairs in the theatre of Philadelphia gives not an idea of refinement in manners. 'A shocking

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 22.

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custom obtains of smoking tobacco in the house, which at times is carried to such an excess, that those to whom it is disagreeable are under the necessity of going away. To the people in the pit, wine and porter is brought between the acts, precisely as if they were in a tavern. The actors are procured, with very few exceptions from Great Britain and Ireland. None of them are very eminent performers, but they are equal to what are usually met with in the country towns in England.”\* The gentry in Virginia proper appear to be higher in the scale of civilization. In the rural parts they closely resemble their English progenitors, especially in the lowlands, where they are celebrated for their politeness and hospitality toward strangers. The citizens of Baltimore in Maryland have a similar reputation, as also the gentry in other parts of this province: but the citizens of New York “have long been distinguished above those of all the other towns in the United States, unless the people of Charlestown should be excepted, for their politeness, gaiety, and hospitality; and indeed, in these points, they are most strikingly superior to the inhabitants of the other large towns.” In general the people of the sea-ports, open to the Atlantic, are more improved in manners than those of the interior.

With the exception of some sea-ports, the people of the lower classes in general are remarkable for an extreme rudeness of demeanour, an extraordinary selfishness, a restlessness with respect to their places of abode, a vexatiously

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 24.



impertinent curiosity, and a proneness to faction. This rudeness is carried to its highest pitch in Philadelphia. The vulgar "return rude and impertinent answers to questions couched in the most civil terms, and will insult a person who bears the appearance of a gentleman, on purpose to shew how much they consider themselves upon an equality with him. Civility cannot be purchased from them on any terms. They seem to think that this is incompatible with freedom, and that there is no other way of convincing a stranger that he is really in a land of liberty, but by being surly and ill-mannered in his presence." A sullen and disobliging behaviour is practiced even by those who are appointed to attend the guests at inns. "Nevertheless they will pocket your money with the utmost readiness, though without thanking you for it. Of all beings on earth Americans are the most interested and covetous." From the character of restlessness and of a factious spirit the colonists from Germany are excepted : but "by the desire of making money both the Germans and Americans, of every class and description, are actuated in all their movements. Self-interest is always uppermost in their thoughts : it is the idol which they worship, and at its shrine thousands and thousands would be found, in all parts of the country, ready to make a sacrifice of every noble and generous sentiment which can adorn the human mind."\* This thirst of gain is the cause of the restless and migratory disposition of the people, who are perpetually on the search for bargains of land, removing from place to place in quest of their great object.

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 30, 115, 127.

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In pursuit of this great end "the American is wholly regardless of the ties of consanguinity. He takes his wife with him, goes to a distant part of the country, and buries himself in the woods, hundreds of miles distant from the rest of his family, never perhaps to see them again. In the back parts of the country you always meet numbers of men prowling about to buy cheap land: having found what they like, they immediately remove: nor, having once removed, are these people satisfied: restless, and discontented with what they possess, they are forever changing. It is scarcely possible, in any part of the continent, to find a man, among the middling and lower classes of Americans, who has not changed his farm and residence many different times. Thousands of acres of waste land are annually taken up in unhealthy and unfruitful parts of the country, notwithstanding that the best settled and healthy parts of the middle states would maintain five times the number of inhabitants which they maintain at present. The American, however, in every change, hopes to make money."\* The spirit of migration, which we find to have prevailed among the Phœnicians, Grecians, and other nations of antiquity, by whatsoever motives excited, is among the means employed by Providence for the peopling of the earth.

The impertinent curiosity of the Anglo-Americans gives great annoyance to travellers. Immediately on his arrival among them, "a stranger must tell whence he came, whither he is going, what his name is, what his business is; and until he gratifies their curiosity on these points, and

\* Weld. vol. 1, p. 126.

many others of equal importance, he is never suffered to remain quiet for a moment. In a tavern he must satisfy every fresh set that comes in, in the same manner, or involve himself in a quarrel, especially if it is found out that he is not a native, which it does not require much sagacity to discover." What renders this teasing custom still more provoking is, that these Americans "scarcely ever give satisfactory answers at first to the enquiries which are made by a stranger respecting their country, but always hesitate, as if suspicious that he was asking these questions to procure some local information, in order to enable him to over-reach them in a bargain, or to make some speculation in land to their injury." Beside this, when it is known, "that a stranger is from Great Britain or Ireland, they immediately begin to boast of their own constitution and freedom, and give him to understand, that they think every Englishman a slave, because he submits to be called a subject." Yet they are never satisfied with the administration of their own government. They are forever cavilling at some of the public measures. Party spirit is forever creating dissensions among them, and one man is continually endeavouring to obtrude his political creed upon another."\* Their political constitution indeed is too democratical, whence in great part arises the rudeness of their manners.

The manners of the vulgar in the southern provinces, where doubtless they are worst, are more than rude, and may be justly denominated savage. Thus in Virginia pro-

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 124, 125, 134.



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per, " whenever these people come to blows, they fight just like wild beasts, biting, kicking, and endeavouring to tear each other's eyes out with their nails. It is by no means uncommon to meet with those who have lost an eye in a combat, and there are men who pride themselves upon the dexterity with which they can scoop one out. This is called *gouging*. To perform the horrid operation, the combatant twists his fore fingers in the sidelocks of his adversary's hair, and then applies his thumbs to the bottom of the eye, to force it out of the socket. If ever there is a battle, in which neither of the persons engaged loses an eye, their faces are however generally cut in a shocking manner, with the thumb nails, in the many attempts which are made at gouging. But what is worse than all, these wretches, in their combat, endeavour to their utmost to tear out each other's virile parts. In the Carolinas and Georgia, the people are still more depraved in this respect than in Virginia proper, insomuch that in some particular parts of these provinces, every third or fourth man appears with only one eye.\*

Islands.

The islands, which lie along the coast of this vast region, are mostly of small importance in comparison of the immense extent of territory to which they are politically attached. On the coast of Maine is Mount-desart Island, fifteen miles long, and twelve broad, and containing, in the

\* Weld, vol. 1, p. 192. The account here given, where I have quoted only one traveller, is confirmed by several others.

year 1790, between seven and eight hundred persons. Two isles, called Cranberry islands, situated on the southeastern side, assist to form a harbour where an inlet penetrates into the land.

Nantucket, politically belonging to the state of Massachusetts, extending fifteen miles in length, with a medial breadth of about four, and containing a harbour, is inhabited by near five thousand people, who chiefly subsist by fishing, particularly for whales, in the taking of which they are in the highest degree expert. The ancient woods have been totally destroyed, and the Indians, who formerly amounted to near three thousand, have, without any wars with the colonists, become extinct by diseases and the use of rum.

Martha's vineyard, belonging also to Massachusetts, twenty-one miles long and six broad, contains between three and four thousand inhabitants, who subsist by fishing, by agriculture, and by the breeding of cattle.

Block Island, and Fisher's Island, the former of which, belonging politically to the continental state called Rhode Island, is inhabited by near seven hundred people, are quite inconsiderable. The latter is regarded as an appendage of Long Island, far the greatest of all on these coasts.

Long Island, parted from the continent by a strait or sound from three to twenty-five miles broad, stretches to a

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length of a hundred and forty miles, with a medial breadth of ten. The land in the northern parts is rough with hills; in the southern low, with a light sandy soil. Tracts of salt meadow abound on the coast. Near the center of the island is Hampstead plain, sixteen miles long and eight broad, never known to produce other vegetables of spontaneous growth than a particular kind of grass and some shrubs, although the soil, which is black, is apparently rich. Eastward of this lies brushy plain, overspread with brushwood, which gives shelter to a vast number of grouse and deer. About the middle of the isle is a lake or pond, termed Rockonkama, about a mile in circuit, which is said to ebb and flow regularly in periods of years, from some unknown cause. The number of inhabitants, who are generally of Dutch descent, is estimated at near forty-two thousand, of whom near five thousand are slaves. This island, which belongs to the state of New York, is divided into three counties, which are subdivided into nineteen townships.

Staten Island, situated nine miles southward of New York city, extends about eighteen miles in length, with a medial breadth of six or seven. It is rough with hills, except a level tract on the southern side. Its inhabitants, mostly of Dutch and French descent, are estimated at nearly four thousand in number.

The rest of the islands are too inconsiderable to merit a description. A chain of insulated stripes of land, or sandy beaches, above a hundred miles long, but hardly a mile



broad, mostly covered with small trees or bushes, from the boundary and shelter of Pamlico sound, on the coast of North Carolina, from the Atlantic ocean. Ranges of small islands, at a short distance from the continent, are seen along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia.



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# THE BAHAMAS,

TERMED also the Lucayas, form a numerous group of small islands, extending near seven hundred miles, in a northwesterly direction, from the vicinity of Hispaniola to that of Florida, parted from the vast island of Cuba by a sea called the Old Bahama Channel, and from the American continent by another sea, improperly denominated the gulf of Florida. The greater islands, including clusters of isles, are estimated at fourteen in number, the smaller at least at seven hundred. The latter consist in great part of rocky islets and what are called quays by mariners. These quays or keys are small sandy isles, appearing a little above the surf of the water, and destitute of other vegetation than a few shrubs or weeds. The Bahamas in general are narrow slips of land, and, with little exception or variety, low in surface, but rising almost perpendicularly from the bottom of the ocean, in such a manner as to be immediately surrounded with unfathomable water. Many of them are environed, altogether or in part, by reefs of rocks parallel to the shores, and at a small distance from them, immediately outside of which the ocean often admits no soundings,

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but inside is found a bottom of fine white sand, or of rocks covered with sea weed. Great part of the tract of ocean over which these isles are scattered is occupied by two extensive shoals, called the great and little Bank, of which the edges are in many places marked by quays or islets, and the bottom of white sand, visible at the depth of twelve or twenty feet, gives a kind of a light colour to both the sea and sky. The great bank in the south seems three hundred leagues in circuit: the little bank in the north not half so much.

Although, from the light colour of the bottom, and the transparency of the water, navigation, with due attention, is easy and safe on the banks, yet these islands to navigators are dangerous in the extreme, particularly in the season of winter, from the violence and uncertainty of the currents and eddies. Often while the mariner is steering one course, he is carried by the current in an almost opposite direction, and finds his vessel in a desperate situation before he is aware. The island called the great Inagua, situated near the mouth of the channel between Cuba and Hispaniola, termed the windward passage, is quite infamous for shipwrecks. On a dangerous reef, at some distance from its shore, many ships have been driven to inevitable destruction. So perpetually expected are shipwrecks, that forty sail of small vessels, denominated *wreckers*, manned with expert seamen, well acquainted with every isle and channel, are licensed by the British government of the Bahamas to keep the sea in all weathers for the saving of the lives and properties of wrecked mariners, who pay salvage for the goods preserved by their exertions.

The extraordinary dangers of navigation among these islands are not ascribed to a tempestuous atmosphere. Although in winter the weather is very inconstant, and strong gales often add to the peril of seamen, yet that season is not so uniformly boisterous here as in more northern latitudes, and the trade-wind, with a little deviation toward the north, continues mostly to blow. The winter is doubtless the least comfortable part of the year; yet its temperature is so mild, that the trees are never entirely stript of their foliage, and the mean warmth of the air, in the hottest part of the day, is marked by at least seventy-two degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. Toward the middle of March a vigour of vegetation, which had previously been languid, denotes the spring. The mean heat of summer, in the hottest part of the day is rated at about eighty-six degrees of Fahrenheit. The mercury in that instrument has seldom risen above ninety degrees in the most ardent season, and as rarely sunk below fifty in the coldest. Through the greater part of the year the sky is delightfully serene, the temperature generally agreeable, and the air at all times wholesome.\*

The isle of Guanahani, one of the Bahamas, was the first American land discovered in 1492 by the renowned Columbus, who named it San Salvador, from the safety which it afforded him from the perils of his voyage. By the cruelty of the Spaniards the innocent and simple na-

\* The account of the Bahamas is principally taken from Mac Kinnon's Tour through the British West Indies. London, 1804.

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tives were in a few years wholly exterminated, and this group of islands long remained in a desert state. From the representations of Captain Sayle, an English navigator, who was driven on one of them, which he called New Providence, in 1667, King Charles the Second of England made a grant of the Bahamas to the Duke of Albemarle and five other proprietors. The little colony, planted at New Providence, became licentious, refused obedience to its governors, and committed depredations on the Spanish settlements. The Spaniards, after frequent ineffectual attempts to exterminate the obnoxious colony, at length, in 1708, assisted by the French, destroyed the plantation and expelled the colonists, who retired to the woods, and thence to Carolina. This, as well as the rest of the Bahamas, again became a desert, but was soon after chosen as a station by a body of pirates, who found it a convenient retreat on account of the shoal water on the banks, and the numerous quays inaccessible to large vessels, and of dangerous approach to any. The most infamously daring of this crew was John Teach, nicknamed Blackbeard, whose successful audacity was so alarming, that in 1718 the British government sent a respectable force to quell the depredators and reduce the colony to order. Since that event the colony of New Providence has remained under British government with little interruption, and has encreased in wealth and numbers, but the rest of the islands continued almost desert till the conclusion of the American war in 1783, when many loyal Americans emigrated to them from South Carolina and Georgia, and formed plantations in them.



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So little successful have these new colonists been in their agricultural projects, that many, after years of trial and the ruin of their properties, have deserted the ungrateful soil to try their fortunes elsewhere, insomuch that, without some unexpected turn in their favour, these islands seem to threaten to become again desert. "Although nature, in all these islands spontaneously brings forth many vegetables both curious and beautiful, she has hitherto refused to resign herself to continued cultivation. The exotics, which are introduced, seem feebly and unsuccessfully to struggle with cold winds, the droughts, and unfriendly seasons; while a crop of hereditary and worthless weeds takes possession of the soil prepared for cultivation, and extracts all its nourishment to administer fertility, as they decay, to the native and unprofitable forest trees succeeding them." The planters have not found any of the indigenous vegetables fit objects of culture. Among these is the wild lemon, the wild coffee, the wild tobacco, the wild pimento, the wild cinnamon, the cascarilla, the candlewood, which is so bituminous as to answer in some respects the purpose of candles; the butterbough, the greasy leaf of which is nutritious for cattle; the cork wood, which is so light as to be a substitute for cork; and the braziletto, which affords a beautiful scarlet dye. The timber, particularly the mahogany, is large enough for being formed into the ribs and beams of small ships, but not into boards and sheathing. Cotton, the staple object of culture in the Bahamas, was a product of the soil before their discovery by Europeans, but the sorts which are cultivated are exotic. Beside that the soil becomes in a few years effete for the production of this vegetable the crop is

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often damaged or destroyed by insects called the red bug and the chenille. The ants are also destructive to the plantations.

The chief articles of commerce furnished by these islands are cotton, salt, turtle, different kinds of fruit, mahogany timber, woods and barks for colouring. The salt is produced in vast quantities by the action of the sun-beams on the water of the ocean, admitted into shallow ponds in the land. "The calcareous rock, of which the land is composed, lies generally in horizontal layers. From the violent action of the sea, which has evidently, and perhaps recently, beaten over them, the surface every where appears worn, fretted, and broken into holes, or often deep excavations. Hence the ocean's water finds a passage, and has formed in many parts of the interior extensive salines or ponds. Early in the year, when the powers of the sun begins to encrease, accompanied with dry weather, the salt every where in these natural ponds begins to crystallize and subside in solid cakes. It remains then only to break the crystals, and rake the salt on shore : and by this easy mode a single labourer may rake from forty to sixty bushels of salt in a day. The process however is facilitated by making small pans, which, as the salt is taken out, may be replenished with brine from the pond."\* Among other amphibious animals the turtle or tortoise, so highly prized for its excellent flesh, resorts in great number to the quays least frequented by mankind, where it is occasionally taken by men to whom it is an ob-

\* Mac Kinnen, chap. 6.

ject of commercial speculation. The alligator, whose flesh resembles that of the sturgeon, is eaten by the inhabitants. Among the few indigenous animals not aquatic is the guana. The offsprings of imported quadrupeds are not numerous, except that of the domestic cat, which has multiplied considerably. Among the birds is the green parrot, the bald pigeon, and the beautiful crane called the flamingo. The last associates in great flocks far from the habitations of men.

The total number of inhabitants in these islands is small, and seems also in a state of decrease. Some are absolutely desert, as the great Bahama, which has given its name to the whole group. Others contain only a few people. Thus on the cluster of isles called Caicos only twelve heads of families; and between two and three hundred slaves were enumerated: on crooked island forty plantations and a thousand negroes: on San Salvador forty heads of families and four hundred and fifty-eight slaves: and on New Providence, far the most populous, somewhat above five thousand persons of all sorts. The last named island approaches in form an equilateral parallelogram, with a diagonal of twenty-seven miles, and acute angles projecting to the east and west. Its land is uncultivated, except the environs of its capital, the town of Nassau, the seat of government of the Bahamas, within which almost all its inhabitants dwell. It owes its population to the profits of a sea-faring life, and the excellence of its harbour, sheltered by a long quay, or insulated slip of land. The governor, with an income of near three thousand pounds a year, acts in conjunction with the two houses of



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provincial legislature, the upper and lower, chosen from among the people of the several islands.

With the exception of New Providence, the larger islands of this group are narrow in proportion to their length. This is most strikingly the case with Long Island, which extends near a hundred miles in length, but in medial breadth not more than three. Toward the end of the eighteenth century eight hundred slaves were employed here in agriculture, but many plantations have since been deserted. Crooked Island is remarkable for its irregular shape, and vast excavations formed in some of its rocks by the action of the waves. Of the clusters of small islands one is termed the Turks, from a dwarfish kind of cactus resembling a Turkish turban. Of these, abounding in salt, the greatest, called the Grand Turk, is about twelve miles long and two broad. Another cluster is that of the Caicos, consisting of some larger and many smaller isles, parted by narrow channels, and lying in the form of a crescent, which opens to the south. The soil in the middle isles of this cluster is accounted the best in the Bahamas. Lucaya and Bahama, each of which has given its name to the whole group, seem to be held in little estimation.

## THE BERMUDAS,

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A solitary cluster, seated in the Atlantic, above two hundred leagues from the coast of Virginia, the nearest land, are accounted about four hundred in number, but most of them are barren islets. They form a figure approaching that of a crescent, about thirty-six miles long and six broad, environed by dangerous reefs of rocks and shoals. They were discovered in 1522 by John Bermudez, a Spanish navigator, who found them destitute of inhabitants. In 1593 they were visited by some Englishmen, and in 1609 Sir George Somers, an English captain, was wrecked on their coast, from whom they were denominated the isles of Somers, or the Summer Islands. Two years after this they received an English colony, which so increased that in the latter part of the seventeenth century it consisted of about ten thousand persons, but has since decreased to half that number. The land is generally high and rugged, interspersed with fertile spots of soil, and destitute of water, except what is preserved from rain in cisterns or procured by sinking wells. The temperature is so mild, that the trees are verdant throughout the year, the spring is perpetual, and the air salubrious; but storms and thunder are frequent, and hurricanes are too often felt. The chief indigenous trees are cedar and palmetto. The chief object of culture is maize. The few quadrupeds are of imported breeds. The indigenous animals are chiefly birds of various kinds. No venomous

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reptiles are found here. The principal island, called Saint George, sixteen miles long and two broad, contains the only town in the cluster, the town of Saint George, the seat of government, consisting of about five hundred houses. This island is divided into nine districts, to which the inhabitants of the rest severally belong. The chief objects of manufacturing industry are sailcloth, and the building of small vessels of cedar, which are valued for swift sailing.

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## SABLE ISLAND,

OR the Isle of Sand, situated alone in the Atlantic, twenty-three leagues distant from the nearest land, Cape Canso in Nova Scotia, extends in the form of a bow, in length eight leagues, in breadth not above half a league. It is destitute of inhabitants, and totally unfit to receive a colony. It is seated on a vast sand-bank or shoal, the water on which gradually deepens in receding from the coast, to fifty fathoms. Two bars extend far from the two ends of the isle, on which and on the shores the surf continually beats with vast noise and violence. The coast is quite inhospitable, affording no harbour. The approach to it is dangerous even to boats. Landing is practicable on the northern



shore only, and in calm weather. The whole isle consists of fine white sand, mixed with white transparent stones. Its face presents a strange appearance, uneven with sandhills, knobs, and cliffs, confusedly jumbled. The sandhills are of a shape approaching a conical figure, of a milk-white hue, and sometimes near a hundred and fifty feet high. Along the middle of the island, through half its length, extends a narrow pond, supplied with water from the ocean at each tide of flood, through a narrow gut on the northern side, twelve feet deep at the time of low water, abounding in seals and other aquatic animals. Many ponds of fresh water are contained in other hollows, on the sides of which grow juniper, blueberries, and cranberries. No trees are here produced, but much of what is called beach-grass, wild peas, and other vegetables, the food of horses, cows, and hogs, which here are wild in a state of nature.

THE ISLANDS OF SAINT  
LAWRENCE,

Cape-Breton.

SEATED in the sea of Saint Lawrence, improperly termed a gulf under the same appellation, consist of the isles of Cape-Breton, Saint John or Prince Edward, Anticosti, and some others of inferior magnitude, all under subjection to the British crown. The first, termed also *Ile Royale* by the French, is parted from Nova Scotia by the strait called Fronsac Passage or the gut of Canso, about half a league wide. This island, colonized early in the eighteenth century by the French, was conquered by the English in the year 1758, under whose government it still remains. It extends about a hundred miles in length and sixty in breadth, but is so deeply indented as to be divided into two peninsulas, connected by an isthmus about half a mile broad. Its coast, environed by pointed rocks, some of which are visible above water, is high and almost inaccessible on the northern side, but affords many receptacles for shipping on the eastern, all of which have a turning toward the south. One of these, the harbour of Louisburgh, with an entrance of four hundred yards in width, a winding length of four leagues, and a depth of at least seven fathoms every where, is one of the finest in the northern regions of America. The land is mountainous in the interior, and so abounds in lakes, that the lower grounds appear to be half covered with water. From these, which remain long frozen, and from the thick

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forests which intercept the sun's rays, the air is cold and foggy, though not supposed unwholesome. From such a state of the atmosphere, and the poverty of the thin soil, which yields little else than moss, the land is little fit for either agriculture or the breeding of cattle. The inhabitants therefore, who are few in number, depend for subsistence on the fisheries in their neighbourhood. Mines of coal abound, also of plaister of Paris, and some say of iron. The governor, at once a civil and military officer, resides at the little town of Sidney, accounted the capital.

The isle of Saint John, lately denominated Prince Edward's island, is severed from the continent by a channel called the Red sea; from three to six leagues wide, and from nine to twenty-five fathoms deep, but of dangerous navigation on account of rocks which border its northern bank. The island, above a hundred and ten miles long, but scarcely ten broad, where widest, and deeply indented by many inlets, bends into a figure approaching that of a crescent, and terminates in two points, that of North cape in the northwest, and that of East point on the eastern side. The numerous inlets form many harbours and roads for anchorage, several of which are commodious. The winter is long; and intensely cold, as in all the neighbouring countries, but the air is healthy, although subject to fogs. The land is of a level nature, well watered, and fertile, furnishing copious supplies of excellent timber, and good pasturage, and productive, where cleared, of all the kinds of grain of northern Europe. The crops however are oft injured by fogs which cause mildew, and by destructive insects, which swarm in the heat of summer.

Saint John.



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This island, colonized by the French in 1719, was seized in 1758 by the English, by whom it is still retained. It has been granted by the British government to several proprietors in districts of twenty thousand acres each, called townships, and also in smaller called half townships. An increasing colony has thus been established, the number of whose people was computed some years ago at seven thousand. The seat of its government, subordinate to that of Nova Scotia, is Charlestown or Charlottestown, seated near the middle of the southern coast.

Anticosti.

Anticosti, situated at the mouth of the vast river Saint Lawrence, extends in length above one hundred and twenty miles, and in breadth, where it is widest, thirty. The coast is destitute of harbours, although the sea is very deep close to the shore; and flat rocks, which stretch far into the water from each extremity, render to shipping the approach hazardous. From the shores, which are flat, the land rises gently toward the central parts, but not so high as to form hills. It is very scantily watered, containing only some pools and rivulets, the channels of which are dry in summer. The sandy soil mixed with rocks, is barren, yielding only stunted wood and plants. The whole is of little value. It is destitute of inhabitants, except that it is occasionally visited by savages engaged in hunting or the fishery. The property of the land, which belongs to some families in Quebec, under British government, might be purchased for a small sum.

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Smaller isles.

The smaller isles consist of those of Saint Paul, the Magdalenes, the Bird isles, Saint Peter, and Miquelon. The first is quite desert, parted from the northern extremity of Cape-Breton by a safely navigable channel, four leagues wide. Of the Magdalene islands, eight in number, situated twelve leagues to the north of Cape-Breton, the largest, containing a deep harbour, consists of a rock, covered with a thin stratum of earth, inhabited by a few fishermen. The Bird isles are two rocks, rising more than a hundred feet above the sea, and terminating above in flat surfaces, covered with the dung of immense flocks of birds, which frequent them chiefly in the breeding season. The isles of Saint Peter and Miquelon lie near the southern coast of Newfoundland. They are barren and of no value except as convenient stations for the fishery. The former, two leagues in length, is furnished with a good harbour for small vessels, of which it can contain thirty. The latter is somewhat larger, and is less barren, as it produces more wood. Miquelon however is conceived to consist of two isles, the greater and the less. The latter, situated southward of the former, is more woody, but otherwise not valuable.

## NEWFOUNDLAND,

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FORMING on one side the boundary of the sea of Saint Lawrence, is parted from Labrador by the strait of Belleisle, which affords every where good anchorage in a depth of thirty or forty fathoms, but is of dangerous navigation in the night on account of the force and uncertainty of its currents. By a multitude of inlets, some of which penetrate very deeply into the land, the coasts of this great island are broken in so extraordinary a manner as to form a vast number and variety of capes and peninsulas. Of the two greatest and most remarkable of the latter one extends far northeastward from the western side, constituting the northwestern portion of this country, which nearly approaches a triangle in figure. The other, advancing from a very narrow isthmus toward the southeast, is itself so pierced by two opposite bays, that its eastern part forms also a peninsula. Of the multitude of inlets, by which the coast of Newfoundland is every where indented, so many are commodious for the reception of ships, that no country is known, in proportion to its size, to furnish so great a number of safe and convenient harbours. To enumerate all such would be to frame a large catalogue. To particularize two or three may suffice. In the western side of the great northwestern peninsula lies a bay termed by the French Ingornachoix, which from a narrow, but perfectly safe, entrance divides into two branches, of which the northern, called port Saunders, is preferable on account of



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its deeper water, but the whole forms one of the noblest harbours in the world. Far inferior in size, though near six miles in length, is Capelin bay, on the eastern side of the great southeastern peninsula, but not inferior to any in safety and convenience. Near this lies the smaller harbour of Ferryland, the inner part of which, called the Pool, is as completely sheltered from all winds as a dock.

The coasts of this island are generally rugged, and serrated with rocky promontories. One of the most remarkable is Cape Broyle, near Capelin bay, which presents to distant mariners the appearance of an enormous saddle. The interior parts exhibit a wild and dreary scene of bleak mountains and hills, marshy plains, quagmires, lakes, and dark forests. Many of the mountains approach the shores as those which border the bay of Saint George in the southwestern quarter, and the chain which is denominated Blow-me-down hills, in a more northern part of the western coast. The lakes and marshes, which occupy so great a portion of the surface, furnish waters to many rivers, of which none seem to be navigable by ships through any considerable length of course. They have however been little explored. The greatest is the Humber, which, issuing from a congeries of waters in the northwestern peninsula, flows toward the southwest, nearly parallel to the western coast, through a course of sixty leagues, to the bay of islands in that quarter. The river Main, the drain of extensive lakes and marshes, which falls into the bay of Saint George on the same coast, is broad and of considerable depth, but of extremely difficult entrance to boats on account of a bar of sand across its mouth,

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on which the waves break with great violence. Among the cataracts is one called the Spout, on the eastern coast of the great southeastern peninsula, formed by a body of water impelled through a fissure of a rock, and falling from such a height as to exhibit the appearance of volcanic smoke, visible far at sea, and thus furnishing a landmark.

The winter in Newfoundland is intensely cold, and of so long duration that the summer is too short for the bringing of corn, and other objects of agriculture, to maturity. The atmosphere is tempestuous, and in summer extremely foggy. Yet the air is wholesome in an uncommonly high degree. The fogs often render navigation dangerous, yet a circumstance has been observed concerning them which appears to be peculiar. "It often occurs that the whole of the ocean around Newfoundland is enveloped in so dense a fog, that it is apparently impossible for a ship to proceed on her course, without incurring the most imminent danger of shipwreck: but, at the same time, there is generally a small space, within a mile or two of the shore itself, entirely clear of the vapour, and, as it were, forming a zone of light around the coast: so that a person, acquainted with this singular phenomenon, will, in some cases, be enabled to attain his port; while a stranger, on the other hand, is afraid to approach the island."\* From the bleakness of the atmosphere, and the poverty of the thin soil, the efforts of agriculture would be vain for the sustenance of mankind. Moss, trees, and shrubs are the chief spontaneous products. The timber

\* Chappell's Voyage to Newfoundland, p. 63.

seems in general neither large, nor of much value except for fuel. The trees by which the country is in general overspread, are mostly pine, spruce, fir, larch, and birch. From an infusion of the tender branches of the spruce, mingled with molasses, a wholesome beverage is made by the inhabitants. Among the shrubs is the juniper, and other kinds which yield berries of different species. Berries which are delicious in tarts or puddings may be found in marshy grounds in prodigious quantities.

Where the land is so little productive, quadrupeds, except the aquatic sorts, cannot be numerous. Hares, deer, squirrels, porcupines, and bears are found in the woods. The reindeer and others of the venison are scarce. The porcupines are in plenty, and their flesh is much esteemed. Wolves, foxes, lynxes, and martins are natives of the island. Some of the foxes in the northern parts are said to be black. Seals abound along the coast, and beavers and otters inhabit the borders of the lakes and rivers. Tame quadrupeds are very few except dogs, the genuine species of which, denominated from this island, so highly esteemed for docility, patience of cold, and endurance in the water, has become very scarce. Dogs are here the beasts of draught, employed in the drawing of loads, particularly of wood for fuel. Aquatic birds are in vast number around the coast and in the lakes and marshes of the interior. Those which frequent the fresh water are chiefly ducks and geese. Partridges are in great plenty. A species, called the spruce-partridge from its feeding on the bark of the spruce, resembles the



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common partridge of England in colour, shape, and size, but it perches on trees, and is so tame as to suffer itself often to be knocked down with poles. The flesh of this bird is bitter when roasted, but has a delicate taste when dressed as a fricassee. Among the insects is the musquito, which proves a plague in the heat of summer. The lakes and rivers abound in fish, such as trout and salmon, to an extraordinary degree, and the neighbouring sea is most copiously stored, especially with cod. Of the fossils of this island, as no search has been made for them, we can only say that porphyry of several colours has been found, and that beds of coal are supposed to be abundant.

This great island is valuable only for the abundance of codfish around its coasts, and on the Great Bank, or vast submarine tableland, in its vicinity, already noted in the General View prefixed to this work. These fish are taken by hook and line. The bait used in this business is either the herring or the capelin. The latter seems to be peculiar to the coasts of this country and of Labrador. It is a small and delicate fish much resembling the smelt. For the depositing of its spawn on the sandy beaches it visits these coasts about August and September in such shoals that each often darkens the sea through the space of a mile or more. They rush with such violence to the shores, that many of them expire on the dry sand, unable to regain their native element. The fishery of cod, which commonly commences early in May, and terminates at the close of September, is prosecuted chiefly on the great bank, but also

on all the coasts of the island, except the northwestern, to which this animal is said never to resort. These creatures bite with such voracity, and are taken with such quickness, that two lines, with two hooks at each, held by the same man, are perpetually in motion, alternately pulled above the surface of the water, the one constantly descending while the other ascends. In the process of curing, each fish passes through the hands of three men, to each of whom is assigned his particular office. "With such amazing celerity is the operation of *heading*, *splitting*, and *salting* performed, that it is not an unusual thing to see ten cod-fish decapitated, their entrails thrown into the sea, and their backbones torn out in the short space of one minute and a half."\* After the salting the fish are dried in the sunbeams on shore, to render them fit for exportation. Fifty thousand tuns of shipping are supposed to be employed every year in this fishery, bearing twenty thousand men; and six hundred thousand quintals, or hundred weights of cod, are computed to be annually exported from the island. This merchandize, with oil of seals and fish, constitutes almost the whole of the exports of this country, which is supplied with provisions and manufactured goods from abroad.

Newfoundland was discovered in 1497, or the following year, by an English squadron under the command of John Cabot, or Sebastian, his son. In some time after this, some English fishermen began to frequent the eastern coasts. To give a government to such, for the prevention of disputes

\* Chappell, p. 129.

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among them, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in 1583, took possession of these parts under a commission from Queen Elizabeth. Encouraged by the success of the English, the French formed settlements on the northern and southern coasts, particularly at the great bay of Placentia. After various disputes for the dominion of the island, the whole was surrendered by France to England by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, with a reservation to the French of a right to fish on the great bank, and of the possession for that purpose of the unfortified isles of Saint Peter and Miquelon. Since that time this country has constantly remained under the dominion of the British crown, but the French and Anglo-Americans are permitted to fish on the banks in its vicinity. The government is vested in a vice-admiral of the British navy, in whose absence, which has place in winter, when the harbours are frozen, his authority devolves to a military officer styled the lieutenant-governor. In case of the latter's death the power is exercised by the chief justice until the vacancy is filled.

The area of this triangular island, of which the southern base extends about three hundred miles, and the altitude from south to north near two hundred and eighty, may contain, with allowance made for its inlets, full twenty-four millions of acres. The population is ill proportioned to such a space. The inhabitants consist of Europeans, and a very small number of indigenous people. Subsisting solely on the profits of the fishery, the former dwell only on the coasts, almost all indeed on the eastern. Of these the greater part are not permanent inhabitants, but return at



the end of the fishing season to Europe, where they remain during the long winter. Of the permanent settlers, "the lower classes are generally composed of turbulent Irishmen, whose unwearied industry during the fishing season in summer, is forcibly contrasted with their unbounded licentiousness in winter. Indeed all ranks of society appear to consider debauchery as the only antidote to the *tædium vitæ*, which prevails between the month of December and the recommencement of the fishery in the May following."\* Of the number of Europeans in either summer or winter I can find no estimate on which we can rely. A colony of Miemacs, settled in Saint George's bay, emigrants from Cape-Breton and the neighbouring parts, are indigenous Americans, though not aboriginals of Newfoundland. They have so intermarried with Europeans that in 1813, the number of purely indigenous exceeded not fifty persons of all ages and both sexes. Indeed the whole of the inhabitants around this bay, amounted not to more than two hundred and nine. The truly indigenous, termed Red Indians from a red colour with which they tinge the hair and skin, are extremely few, inhabiting the interior, and the northeastern, northern, and northwestern parts. Barbarously treated by ignorant fishermen, these savages, who at first were found friendly and obliging, have conceived so implacable an enmity to Europeans as completely to avoid all kinds of intercourse with them. They "study the art of concealment so effectually, that, although often heard, they are seldom seen :"+ and, when seen, they run away, and expertly disguise their tracks from the discovery of pursuers.

\* Chappell, p. 52.

† Idem, p. 120.

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The town of Saint John, the capital, and indeed the only collection of houses in the island which can merit the title of a town, is seated on the eastern coast of the great south-eastern peninsula, on an excellent harbour, with a long and narrow, but safe and not difficult entrance, between rocky precipices of enormous height on the northern side, and a rugged mountain on the southern. The town, which may perhaps be in a state of improvement, has hitherto consisted of one street, narrow, mean-looking, and dirty, composed chiefly of wooden houses, and extending all along one side of the harbour. The number of its inhabitants fluctuates and is uncertain. They are numerous in summer, but few in winter. Placentia, situated on a bay of that name, is small, but next to Saint John's in size and population.\* Many small islands lie around the coast of Newfoundland, of which none appear to have permanent inhabitants, nor to have been well described, except those which have been already mentioned, and probably very few can deserve a particular description. They are doubtless in general rocky, bleak, and barren.

\* Chappell ; Haye's Brief Relation of the Newfoundland ; Whitbourne's Discourse, &c. of Newfoundland.

## BELLEISLE,

AN island, which gives name to a strait separating Labrador from Newfoundland, situated northeastward of the northwestern peninsula of the latter country, seems hardly so large as Miquelon, and is high, rugged, and barren, uninhabited and apparently not habitable. Beneath the precipitous rocks which line its coast, and against which the billows foam with tremendous fury, monstrous icebergs are often grounded, and form a strong contrast with black cliffs behind.

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FINIS.



# EXTRACT

of the most important facts and circumstances  
connected with the case of the  
State of New York v. John A. Sweeney  
and others, as set forth in the  
report of the Special Commission  
appointed by the Governor of the  
State of New York, in 1892,  
to investigate the alleged  
fraudulent practices of the  
Sweeney family, and to  
ascertain the truth of the  
charges against them.

1897





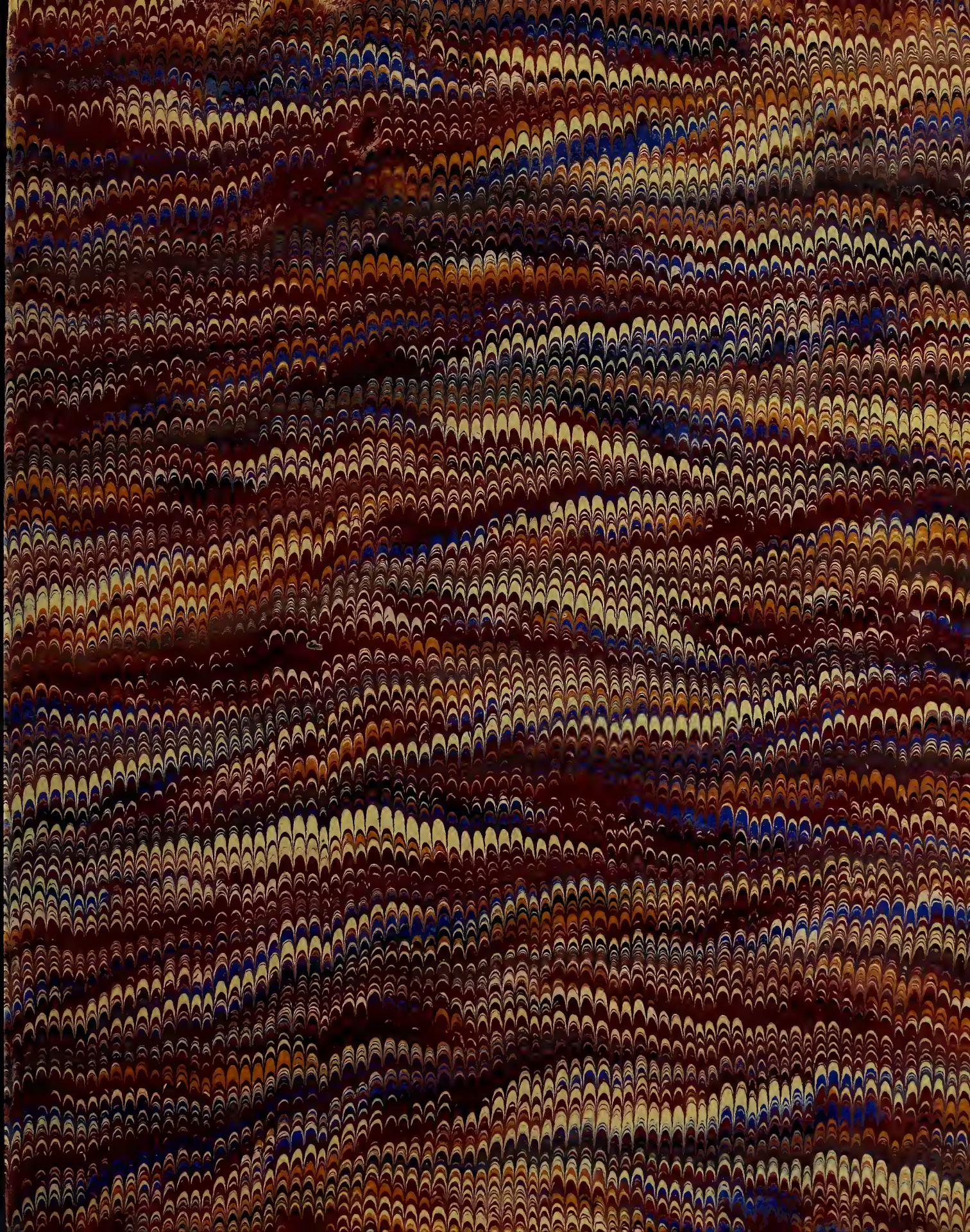














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